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THE ISLAND OF THE SAINTS:

A PILGRIMAGE THROUGH

I R E L A N D.

THE
ISLAND OF THE SAINTS

A PILGRIMAGE THROUGH
I R E L A N D

BY
JULIUS RODENBERG,
AUTHOR OF "AN AUTUMN IN WALES."

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TO
HIS ROYAL HIGHNESS ERNEST II.,
REIGNING DUKE OF SAXE-COBURG-GOTHA,
THE ENLIGHTENED PATRON OF GERMAN ART AND LITERATURE,
THIS VOLUME IS
(BY PERMISSION)
DEDICATED.

P R E F A C E.

IN accordance with a promise I made the author during his stay in London last summer, I bring before English readers Julius Rodenberg's views about men and manners in that incomprehensible country, Ireland. My principal reason for doing so is, that although so many works have already appeared about the Land of the Saints, the majority have had the defect of being written by Englishmen; and it is as fair to accept their verdict as it would be to judge of Italy from an Austrian point of view. Hence I considered that the statements of an unprejudiced foreigner would be accepted as, at any rate, telling the truth about the present state of Ireland.

Dr. Rodenberg has peculiar qualifications for the task he has voluntarily assumed: he speaks and understands English as well as most men, and he has prepared himself for this work by a lengthened residence in London, and by a summer spent in Wales. Before proceeding to

Ireland, he made careful studies of his terrain from books and old chronicles, and, it will be seen, has confined his attention principally to the people, leaving the show places of Ireland to be learned from the Handbook.

In arranging this volume for the press, I have carefully avoided repetition of those legends—save when absolutely necessary—which, though new to Dr. Rodenberg's German readers, were familiar to us, while I have retained everything which spoke for and against the Irish people. The author may be accused of harsh judgment in some cases, but from the intimacy on which I stand with him, I am ready to vouch for his impartiality and truthfulness. But, in going so far, I beg to render him responsible for all his sentiments: I in no way wish to endorse them, but prefer to confine myself to the modest office of translator.

LASCELLES WRAXALL.

The Hut, Guildford,
December, 1860.

CONTENTS.

CHAPTER I.

PAGE

LANDING IN DUBLIN—COLLEGE-GREEN—WILLIAM OF ORANGE— THOMAS MOORE—SACKVILLE-STREET—THE BOTANIC GARDENS —TICKELL'S HOUSE—STELLA—THE PHŒNIX—THE WELLINGTON TESTIMONIAL—IRISH SIGNBOARDS—HOWTH REGATTA—THE VIL- LAGE INN—NATIONAL DANCES	1
---	---

CHAPTER II.

AN OLD FRIEND—TRINITY COLLEGE—THE LIBRARY—BRIAN BOROO'S HARP—ROSY-FINGERED PEGGY—BERLIN PANCAKES—PETTICOAT- LANE—MONSTER SHOPS—ST. PATRICK'S CATHEDRAL—SWIFT'S GRAVE—IRISH BEGGARS—A DRIVER'S COSTUME—THE LIBERTIES —DONNYBROOK FAIR—WINNING THE GARTERS—A BRAVE IRISH- MAN—ENGLISH VIEWS OF IRELAND—ONLY ONE HALFPENNY— SINGING AND FIGHTING—RETURN TO TRINITY—PADDY—OLIVER GOLDSMITH'S ROOM	16
--	----

CHAPTER III.

WICKLOW—IRISH SCENERY—THE VILLAGE MAIDEN—THE SUGAR- LOAVES—THE DESERTED VILLAGE—THE CABIN—HEDGE SCHOOLS —THE PENAL CODE—THE DEVIL'S GLEN—THE FAIRIES—THE BEALTAINÉ—THE SANCTUARY—ANNAMOE—IRISH HOSPITALITY —ARRIVAL AT GLENDALOUGH	41
--	----

CHAPTER IV.

PAGE

GLENDALOUGH—NEW ACQUAINTANCES—TALKING GERMAN—MILES DOYLE—THE ENGLISH WAITER—THE UPPER LAKE—THE “PIC- TURESQUE TOURIST”—THE HORSE-STEALER—ST. KEVIN’S BED— THE SEVEN CHURCHES—A FAIRY CUP—FINN-MAC-CUL—THE CA- THEDRAL—PRAY FOR DIARMAIT—THE ROUND TOWER—THE IVY CHURCH	59
---	----

CHAPTER V.

GOOD-BY TO GLENDALOUGH—THE CLARA VALLEY—THE HILL OF FINN’S WIVES—RATHDRUM—POTHEEN—THE VALE OF AVOCA— THE MEETING OF THE WATERS—THE MOTTY-STONE—IRISH PAT- TERNS—WOODEN-BRIDGE—A SONG—NIGHT SCENES—A GAME WITH SHILLELAHS—MINNIE—A PROTECTOR—AN IRISH ROW— PLEASANT DAYS AND HAPPY MEMORIES	83
---	----

CHAPTER VI.

THE LAKES OF KILLARNEY—THE PARADISE OF IRELAND—THE TORC- VIEW HOTEL—A PLEASANT WELCOME—THE WEATHER—AN EVEN- ING STROLL—IRISH SONGS—THADY THE DRIVER—KILLARNEY TOWN—THE IRISH CHARACTER—THE ATLANTIC TELEGRAPH— THE RUINS OF AGHADOE—THE CATHEDRAL—THE UNHONOURED DEAD—THE CHAMBER OF DEATH—ANTIQUÉ SCULPTURE—THE SICK BOY	100
---	-----

CHAPTER VII.

BEAUFORT-BRIDGE—OLD SALLY—KATE KEARNEY—THE GAP OF DUNLOE—THE BLACK LAKE—THE ARTILLERYMAN—A LOVELY WALK—KATHLEEN O’MORE—AN OLD FRIEND—THE KNIGHT OF DUNLOE—WAKING THE ECHOES—THE UPPER LAKE—LORD BRAN- DON’S COTTAGE—AN OLD BACHELOR—THE BOAT—THE ARBUTUS —THE LAKE ISLANDS—HAPPY JACK—THE LAST ROSE OF SUMMER —AN ACCIDENT	118
--	-----

CHAPTER VIII.

BACK TO TORC-VIEW—FIDDLER MICK—THE CABIN—A HEARTY HATER—JACK LOWNY AT HOME—THE MYRTLE OF KILLARNEY —THE DANE’S FORT—AN IRISH CABIN—THE GOOD PEOPLE— A FAIRY TALE—DRUIDIC REMAINS—LISSYVIGGIN WOOD—THE FAIRY PALACE—THE WET-NURSE—THE DRUIDIC TEMPLE—POOR LARRY—A TRUE-HEARTED GIRL	142
---	-----

CHAPTER IX.

PAGE

THADY THE DRIVER—THE GOOD PEOPLE ON THEIR TRAVELS—THE CAVE OF DUNLOE—KILLARNEY TOWN—MR. HERBERT'S PARK— MUCKROSS ABBEY—M'CARTHY MORE—GLENA BAY—THE MU- THERIN ROE—INNISFALLEN—THE HERMIT—ROSS ISLAND— O'DONOGHUE'S CASTLE—SINKING GROUND—THE WAKE—UL- LALUH—FAREWELL TO KILLARNEY—THE FUNERAL . . .	164
--	-----

CHAPTER X.

MALLOW—AN IRISH PRIEST—THE NATIVE LANGUAGE—LIMERICK —ENGLISH TOWN—IRISH TOWN—STREET LIFE—LIMERICK GLOVES—POPULAR BALLADS—CAHILL AND MALONE—THE HAY- MARKET—NEWTOWN PERRY—THE CASTLE—THE CORPORAL— SARSFIELD—THE WHISKY STORE—OUR FRIENDS THE FRENCH— THE ARTICLES OF THE TREATY—IRISH BRAVERY—THE ENGLISH RECRUITING-SERGEANT—GOD SAVE THE QUEEN! . . .	190
---	-----

CHAPTER XI.

THE ROYAL HOTEL—GEORGE-STREET—THE ROYAL ALBERT SALOON —THE LIMERICK PRIMA DONNA—BONNIE DUNDEE—AN IRISH SUNDAY—LIMERICK LASSES—A BRANCH-LINE—CASTLE CONNELL —THE CASTLE OF THE O'BRIENS—THE GENIUS OF IRELAND— MISS O'KEANE—THE RAPIDS—THE CHAPEL . . .	216
--	-----

CHAPTER XII.

THE CONVEYANCE—FIRST CLASS—BOUND FOR THE WEST—AN IRISH BUILDER—KILLALOE—HIS EMINENCE—BRIAN BOROO—INISH KALTRA—ST. PATRICK'S PURGATORY—PORTUMNA—CLONMAC- NOISE—M'DERMOTT'S CHURCH—ST. KIARAN'S STONE—ATHLONE —THE COMFORTS OF AN IRISH INN—THE POSTMASTER . . .	230
--	-----

CHAPTER XIII.

ARRIVAL IN GALWAY—TRACES OF THE SPANIARDS—MIXTURE OF BLOOD—THE SPANISH PARADE—THE CLADDAGH WOMEN—A PECU- LIAR RACE—SUPERSTITIONS—LEGENDS—CLADDAGH COURTING— FUNERAL CUSTOMS—IRISH PIGS—THE GREAT BALL—THE OLD FAMILIES—MR. CARDEN—MISS O'KEANE—WILD KATHLEEN— GREEN AND ORANGE . . .	242
---	-----

CHAPTER XIV.

PAGE

BIANCONI'S CARS—THE HORSE-DEALERS—OUGHTERARD—CONNA- MARA CABINS—RECESS HOTEL—CLIFDEN—THE FAIR—MEN AND ANIMALS—LETTERFRACK—WILD KITTY—PETER CONNELLAN— DIAMOND HILL—DARBY THE PIPER—THE PEASANT WEDDING— QUAINT CUSTOMS—THE MARRIAGE—LOUGHY FADAGHAN—THE FIRST KISS—THE RACE FOR THE BOTTLE—THE RINCAFADA— THROWING THE STOCKING	263
---	-----

CHAPTER XV.

JOYCE'S LAND—LENANE—THE INN—ACROSS THE KILLERY—THE BOATMAN'S SONG—DELPHI—AN ACCIDENT—A NIGHT IN A CABIN —THE RETURN—ESCAPE FROM PURGATORY—MADAME HOR- TENSE—THE SIEUR DE FRAMBOISIE—ERRIE VALLEY—WESTPORT —THE PORT	293
---	-----

CHAPTER XVI.

BELFAST—OPULENCE AND CRIME—ANDERSON—ROW—KIDNAPPERS —THE MENAGERIE—AN OLD ACQUAINTANCE—THE SUEZ CANAL —A TOUR ROUND THE WORLD—THE VILLA—THE TORN COAT— THE EMIGRANTS—FAREWELL TO IRELAND	312
--	-----

THE
ISLAND OF THE SAINTS.

CHAPTER I.

LANDING IN DUBLIN—COLLEGE-GREEN—WILLIAM OF ORANGE—THOMAS MOORE — SACKVILLE-STREET — THE BOTANIC GARDENS — TICKELL'S HOUSE—STELLA—THE PHOENIX—THE WELLINGTON TESTIMONIAL—IRISH SIGNBOARDS—HOWTH REGATTA—THE VILLAGE INN—NATIONAL DANCES.

THE traveller who crosses to Dublin from the rich manufacturing cities of Western England, can hardly overcome the uncomfortable sensation of a certain emptiness, barrenness, and poverty. The Irish, it is true, are proud of their city; and exquisitely as it is situated—on one side gently sloping down to the blue bay, which is compared to the Gulf of Naples for the picturesque shape of its shores, and the glorious colour of its waters, on the other side enclosed by the blue ranges of the Wicklow mountains—the view from a distance is truly enchanting. But so soon as the traveller begins walking through the streets, the pleasant feeling produced by the sight of what Nature has effected, disappears through the sight of Irish life and humanity. It has been the destiny of this country for nearly a thousand years, that men have opposed their darkest passions, hatred and re-

venge, to a primitively rich and good-tempered nature. Who cannot lament that men have gained the victory?

In the main thoroughfares and squares, Anglicism has decidedly encroached upon what was naturally Irish; they have the external aspect of English streets and squares. They are even broader and more open; the extension of trade has not here compressed men and houses together, as is the case across the Channel, where the soil is a capital. Here the ground seems comparatively worthless. The shop-windows are also elegantly decorated after the English type; but the men who stand to admire the vanities, look neither so kind nor so good-humoured as their brethren in Regent-street or Bond-street. College Green is a very handsome square, and the sight of this imposing spot redeems temporally that feeling of discomfort produced by the narrower streets. The back ground of the square is occupied by the pillared façade of the venerable and extensive Trinity College; the other most striking building is the Bank of Ireland. Not far from the bank is the statue of William the Third. A sturdy wight, this Oranger! With firm hand, he guides his brazen steed, with muscular limbs he maintains his seat upon it! The horse's bit glistens with gold; golden too are the laurels which the great king, the victor of the Boyne, wears. The same man who with his great and silent soul, with an unrelaxing and sure hand, saved the liberty of England and the national integrity—the same man crushed the liberty of Ireland and its national integrity with equal strength of mind and hand. How different is the feeling with which the friend of independence stands before the picture of this monarch in Guildhall, and his equestrian statue in Dublin! And how difficult does it become for the student, who seeks in

history before all that which is so rarely found in the life even of the noblest—justice : how difficult is it for him to believe in the brilliant, unblurred portrait, which the master hand of Macaulay has drawn of his ideal ! It is a work of art, but more in the style of a Livy than of a Thucydides.

Not far from Trinity College, stands the statue of another prince—a prince of song—THOMAS MOORE. His laurels are not blood-stained ; the pure bright sun flashes on them. And yet he did much for the political and moral emancipation of his nation ; with his little, delicate songs, he effected more for the Irish than many of the agitators with bloody words and bloody weapons. There was a time, and it is not quite past, when nothing was so popular in the drawing-rooms of the English nobility, as Tom Moore and his Irish Melodies. It was impossible for people daily to hear songs about Erin, her tears, her misfortunes, and her beauty, and not presently feel some slight sympathy. And the least that can be said about this effect in England is, that the poet succeeded in making the land and its dirty people, hitherto so contemptuously treated, an object of interest to the English. The effect he produced in Ireland was incomparably more important. Every child in Dublin can show you a modest house at the corner of Augier-street, now a poor grocer's, and tell you, "In that house Tom Moore was born." The real Irish scholars—the passionate antiquarians, for nowhere has antiquarianism grown such a passion as here, for national reasons—may speak with haughty contempt of the singer, who settled in a verse or a strophe matters to which they devoted a life. But his songs have penetrated to the heart of the Irish people, and live in their mouths, like none of the other native poets who before or

after him have sung of the beauty or woes of Ireland. In the mountains of Wicklow, on the lakes of Killarney, even in the far West, they may be heard ; the first thing the Irish gratefully accepted from the English was Moore's songs ; and wherever English is not understood, they have been translated into Irish.

From this square, Sackville-street is reached across Carlyle-bridge. This bridge forms the main connexion between the two parts of the city, which are separated by the Liffey ; and as it is much narrower than any of the Thames' bridges, it looks very animated during business hours. A peculiar institution of the Dublin streets is the jaunting-car, and it indicates the state of nature in which Ireland is still partially stagnating. A continental temper must grow gradually accustomed to this half-wild vagabondising in the open air, in rain and sunshine. The heightened luxury of Dublin has introduced the use of springs in these cars, and so you rattle along pleasantly enough ; you jump up or jump down when you please, and if a sudden shower wet you to the skin, the sun is generally kind enough to dry the car and its contents. But when pretty Irish girls hang on to these cars, with their dainty little feet peeping out from beneath the rug, and when they dart past you like fairies, drawn by the lean but quick-stepping horse—then, continental temper, take care, lest such a black-eyed maid may laughingly carry you off !

Sackville-street is a very wide and cleanly kept street. It is the Regent-street of Dublin ; of course much quieter and—may I use the term ?—more provincial. But it is the street of business, of the better class shops, of book and print sellers, of amusement, and of loungers. At the lower end is the Rotunda, a concert-room, whose bill-

plastered walls informed me that ere long two men, who would be my invisible, but all the more faithful, companions through Ireland, would make their appearance there—Charles Dickens and Cardinal Wiseman. Both would be received with equal enthusiasm in Ireland, and Friend Punch, the godless rebel, was not so very wrong when he placed Piccolomini in her *Traviata* costume and Cardinal Wiseman in his cardinal's hat on the same stage, from which they bowed gratefully to the noisy audience of the Dublin Rotunda.

My walk next led me to the oldest districts and suburbs of the city. Here Dublin certainly looks curious and quaint enough. The road and the prospect grew with every step poorer and balder: vegetable gardens with a wall of rough stones, thickly covered with clay and dust. Behind them huts, with clay walls and closely-shorn straw roofs, and on the road itself cows, pigs, and human beings. The eye and mind do not feel more pleasantly addressed until the walls of the Botanical Garden close in the view, and its primæval trees afford the wayfarer a holy gloom and cooling shade. A few handsome houses stand in the vicinity of the gardens, but so soon as the majestic portal is passed, a glorious fragrance of flowers is noticed. Brilliantly green lawns delight the eye and lull the mind to repose: well-tended flower-beds, noble clusters of trees, and trailing bushes, give the whole scene at once a character of variety and order. The freedom of the wood, the freshness of the meadow, and the elegance of the flower-garden are combined in these parks, which had their first and true home in England.

More valuable to me, however, were the recollections attaching to this gaily-enamelled spot. In the house

now inhabited by the inspector of the gardens once lived Tickell, whose greatest merit allowed by the history of English literature is the friendship which Addison felt for him through life. This house stands in the centre of a garden, not far from the wall, and shut out from the road by tall bushes and shrubs. Glass houses full of tropical vegetation stand on its right ; but over the roof of the one-storied house the old trees still rustle and moan. The front side, with a species of turreted porch, a modest doorway, and one large window, which illuminates the hall and the clean white wooden stairs, looks on the luxuriant abundance of the garden, which, with its whispering shrubs, runs close to the stone-covered yard and the pump. Quiet enough is everything now—there at the window rests an idle hand—there at the well stands a girl drawing water—there in the garden two labourers are lying in the mid-day sun ; quiet enough is the spot where once all was so merry. At the time when Addison lived in Dublin, as Secretary to Lord-Lieutenant Sunderland, this garden was the gathering place of a mixed and important society, a society in which were found all the ingredients that render life sweet or bitter—genius, enthusiasm, patriotism, love, friendship, hatred, misfortune, paroxysm. To me no face I recal is so significant as that of Jonathan Swift, the hapless genius condemned, with all his wondrous talent, energy, and ambition, never to attain that which so often falls to the lot of the weaklings and half-men—the Mephistopheles of humour, destined to die by the poison of his own shafts. His whole life was a chain of brilliant commencements, intoxicating prospects, enthusiastic illusions. And the end ? Disillusion, misanthropy, and madness !

Beneath Glasnevin Hill lies the park in which Stella

once resided with Dr. Delany. The gable of the broad stone mansion peeps out over the high garden-wall from amid the close-grown, shadow-haunted tree tops. When I, intoxicated by the power of the mid-day sun and the melancholy charm of old recollections, rose from the bench before Tickell's house, and left the garden to proceed towards the mansion, I noticed on the other side of the way a young and pleasant-looking girl, evidently, by her dress, belonging to the higher classes. On asking her about Delany's house, she told me, with a smile, that she was the daughter of the present owner, and would willingly be my guide through the spots consecrated to the sweet martyrdom of love. She fulfilled her promise most agreeably, and when I left her, half an hour later, and the gloomy avenue of trees under which she lived, I hailed a car, and begged the driver to convey me into the open air, for I thought it too dangerous to allow the magic of old recollections to be renewed in so fascinating a way.

The driver pushed on. The breeze was fresh, and the view became opener. But no one can escape his fate, and on this day "old recollections" seemed to be mine. For we had scarce entered Phoenix Park ere my car-driving cicerone showed me to the right of our road the palatial summer residence of the Lord-Lieutenant, and told me that the glistening white house on the left was the one in which Addison formerly lived. Here we passed, in the middle of the road, the pillar with the phoenix, which gives the park its name. This wide green place can only be called a park figuratively, for there are no park-like arrangements, though on both sides of the way are numerous herds of cattle and flocks of sheep. Here and there, alone in the centre of the plain,

stand clumps of trees. But what imparts its special charm to the park is the blue range of the Wicklow mountains, which close the horizon on the left with their soft, molodious outline.

We galloped through the cows, and then kept along the Liffey bank. The black green water flows along here under the trees, through pasturage and ploughed fields. We met hardly anybody save an isolated soldier, or a priest hurrying along with his breviary. In all England I did not see so many soldiers and priests as in and round Dublin. Of all the buildings worth seeing, the third was safe to be connected with the troops or the priesthood. Thus, here in the park, high above the meadows and their peacefully-grazing denizens, stand powder magazine, military hospital, and constables' barracks; and at its exit, upon an artificial mound, surrounded by a ditch and chains, towers the Wellington Testimonial. It is a gigantic granite pyramid, bearing on its side in golden letters the names of the victories gained by the Hero of Waterloo. The strangest thing about this monument is that it does not bear the name of the most memorable battle—the word “Waterloo” may be sought in vain.

As we had now returned to the city, we drove along the quays, by the ship-laden river. The scene here is very lively, and through the proportionately narrow breadth of the water, and the vicinity of the houses and quays on the other bank, it looks more perfect and compact. Here you forget for a moment that you are in the country, whence people emigrate by thousands, while fields of such an extent and power of production as would support them all, lie fallow. In the streets, the boards on the houses and shops attracted my attention most.

What a history can be read on them ! What a description of the glory and splendour of past days ! Royal names adorn cobblers' shops, and the Macs and the Os, the sons and grandsons of the old clan chiefs, have become tailors and clothiers. Here a M'Murrough, a descendant of the old rebel of 1536, sold bitter ale and spirits ; there an O'Connor, the representative of the celebrated Offaly chief, belauded his cigars and snuff ; while between them both an Isaac MacMoses had established himself—maybe a prince's son too, who hopes for the Messiah, and his return to the promised land. Irish and Jews—what a resemblance in their history and destiny ! And yet it seems to me that we must regard the fate of the Irish as the harder of the two. Whatever the Jews may have suffered and endured, they did so as strangers in a strange land, and their faith in the Messiah consoles them with the sacred promise of return. But the Irish are strangers in their own land, their own houses, their own sanctuaries ; they feel themselves to be strangers, and speak English as strangers. It is an unpleasant dialect which a native Englishman will not understand at once : the true guttural Celtic “ch” is the Shibboleth for Saxon throats, the instrument of torture to Saxon ears.

In the afternoon I made an excursion to Howth, a picturesque village at the northern extremity of the Bay. The finest weather favoured me, and so soon as we drove over the iron suspension-bridge behind the city, I obtained the first glance over the deep blue sea, set in the greenest of shores. To my right was the bog of Clontarf, whose heroic traditions could not withstand the magic of a laughing sun ; next came the peninsula of Howth, stretching far out into the sea, with the white gleaming

houses, and green jagged hills behind. Before the eye lost itself in the deep blue of the sky and water, it rested on the island hill—Ireland's Eye, with an old watch-tower on its western point. The whole village was in festal excitement, for a regatta was taking place in the bay. Gay flags were hanging across the pier, and close to the tower on Ireland's Eye lay the smartly dressed vessel of the umpires. And then the quaint mass of people hanging on this, the furthestmost shore! On the hill-slopes, on walls, jetties, and bridges, stood, sat, and lay men and women, crones and children, looking intently at the boats which, with outspread sails, flashed round the island. In this sweet do-nothing of looking and resting, a trait of the Southern character is unmistakable: only the Spaniard, the Italian, or the Irishman can lie so silently, and so full of inward delight, on the sunny slope; the Saxon, with his powerful nature, ignores the Neapolitan "*vede e muori.*"

The Bay of Dublin is semicircular, the two end points being Kingstown (the real harbour of the city, as the water in shore is too shallow for large vessels) and Howth. The single street of the last-named village runs up the hill-side, and looks poverty-stricken enough. On all sides are falling cabins, or houses whose building is not finished. Even at the first-class hotel where we dined, leaving out of the question the miserable dinner, there was no paper on the walls; only the legs of the chairs and benches were polished, the rest being left in its dirty roughness. The traveller in Ireland often feels as if it were man's sole object there to destroy by his labour the impression which the most charming scenery produces. Standing on the uneven street before the door of one of these wretched cabins, you can see through the back

window the sea and the Dublin hills. As sunset approached, I climbed up the hill, on whose side the village hung like a nest; milkmaids met me, a couple of women returning from harvesting, and cars with laughing fairies.

From the top of the hill the path descends on the other side over rocks. A few pleasant white villas crown the top, and wheat grows poorly in the fields around. All at once I enjoyed the most glorious view from this spot; before me lay the bay in the rosy glow of the setting sun, and the Wicklow hills gradually fading away into a golden cloud. It began raining gently, and the clouds moved across the sky, spectrally beautiful and grand. I went down to the beach and sat down on an old wall. Before me lay the bay, with boats upon it with their white and red sails, and to my right the hills in a golden vapour. Gulls curled round my head: two steamers were moving seawards—and then suddenly there came over all a wide arched rainbow. Not a sound save the gentle rippling of the sea over the pebbles; over the top of the hill the sun's parting gleams; the water flashed with white, and blue, and green, the sails shone like silver, and a second fainter rainbow appeared near the first. Thus I sat on the rough wall by the beach, under brambles and yellow flowers, and the corn rustled behind me, the descending lark sang, while before me the wide sea grew darker, and two white seamews hovered over my head.

At length the increasing coolness of night urged me to return, and I hurried past the castle of the St. Lawrence family to the village. When I reached it, night had just set in. At the entrance of the village children with black hair and black eyes, with naked feet, and hardly

more clothing than a shirt, ran to meet me. At the doors of the cabins women lay stretched out on the ground. I stopped for a while before the gateway of the old abbey, which, in reality, is only the ruins of a church built by the ancestors of the present Lord Howth, in the first half of the thirteenth century. It is one of the most honourable customs of the Irish people to bury their dead under the ruins of sacred buildings, and hence the consecrated ground here has become the village churchyard. With the dust of abbots and knights is mingled the dust of old sailors and pretty fishermoids ; and the tower, whose peal of bells once echoed peacefully across the waters, bows its head sadly over all. And on the low wall, which divides God's acre from the village of the living, the children sit, boys and their girls chat, the old men lean, and look over the ground in which they will soon rest, at the sea, on whose bosom they passed their happy youth. One of the old men, a fisherman, with long grey hair, who had probably been standing here half the day, spoke with me, but his English was very queer, and he introduced several French phrases. He employed them in my honour and to the great delight of the fishermen who collected round us, several times ; for he took me for a Frenchman, as my accent proved to him that I was not an Englishman. To the common people in Ireland, there are, besides themselves, only two nations in the world, English and French, one of which they hate, the other love. My old fisherman paid me many compliments about my "nation" and my "emperor," and the others standing round, to whom my friend seemed a species of oracle, cordially joined in. He was eighty years of age, and told me he had served in the great war on board a vessel that cruised off the French coast. He

had been to Cherbourg, where he saw the great Emperor, and afterwards he had also seen the great Washington. The tower on the hill, over the churchyard, was built in the old war, and employed for a signal tower, as a French invasion was apprehended. "But," he added, as if afraid lest these preparations against my country might vex me, "the English did all that; we are fond of the French." "Yes, that we are," all the bystanders said, and shook my hand heartily at parting.

In the village there were high jinks. Victor and vanquished in the afternoon's regatta had made peace, and were singing, jumping, dancing and drinking, as if for a wager. The cabins, too, with their straw-roofed mud walls, now that they were lit up, looked very picturesque on the rocks over the sea. The cabin encloses a small quadrangular space with earth floor, and over it is the naked straw-pointed roof, uncovered and unplastered. Along one side is the hearth with the peat fire, which throws a lurid light over all, a couple of wooden stools, a dresser, with glasses, plates, and knives; under the window—a hole with a blind pane of green glass—a table; against the opposite wall, the arm-chair for the house-father, a bed for the entire family—kitchen, cellar, keeping-room, and bedroom at once. Such is a cabin, generally, in the east of Ireland.

In the village inn there was a grand commotion; the fiddle was scratched there, and the pipes blown, and there was laughing, and jumping, and cursing, and singing, and yelling. In the front room, at the open window, sat the drunken fiddler, who tyrannised over the whole company. If he changed from one tune to another in the midst of a jig, that was his business; and when he made faces at a girl standing outside the window, that was

his business too ; and when he lifted his bow and, instead of drawing it over the strings, laid it about the head of a fellow whom he said annoyed him, that was really his business. In a word, he was a despot, and folk must dance to his tune. The melodies were plainly old national ; they possessed the rattling progress and sadly shrill conclusion of the Irish popular song. But what a drunken fiddler can make out of national melodies, even the boldest fancy cannot imagine ! The room was very small, and the spectators sat along the walls drinking hot whisky and water, and eating cakes which a woman, sitting at a table with her basket, offered for sale. The space for the dancers was reduced to a minimum, but fortunately an Irish jig does not require much room. It is not a dance in our sense of the word, as among us no one, at any rate of our young people, would promise himself enjoyment from this sort of pleasure. The nature of the Irish dances is not sensual like ours, or, rather, it displays a more refined sensuality. Dancing is here regarded as an art, in which the spectator has the pleasure and the performer the honour, besides the perspiration it produces.

Only one dance went on at a time, consisting either of two girls and a boy, or two boys and a girl ; in Western Ireland, indeed, I often saw one boy surrounded by an applauding crowd, dancing away for a quarter of an hour. Our dancers did not quit the spot ; they constantly tripped round one point, they trembled all over, and were in such a solemn and serious humour that not a single feature moved. By-and-by they danced themselves into such a heat that the perspiration ran down their face, the whole body and every article of clothing seemed to quiver, and at last when they could not, in the

literal sense of the term, move hand or foot, they terminated with a bound, and went to give the fiddler their pence, who, as he had expected sixpence, made all sorts of critical and slightly impertinent remarks. Then came a Highlander in full fig and with bagpipe in hand ; but he had scarce blown the first squeaking tones at the door ere a couple of drunken women stepped forward and kissed and led triumphantly into the back room the brown little muscular, and anything but handsome, fellow. Here sailors, and fishermen, and old women, were sitting on two long benches. The Highlander posted himself in the background and played the bagpipes ; the two drunken women had, in the mean while, fetched a youth of not more than eighteen, and began dancing a jig in the narrow space between the benches. Presently the heat and the smell overpowered me, though I was so anxious to see the performance to the end, and I stepped forth into the exquisite moonlight that illumined the bay.

CHAPTER II.

AN OLD FRIEND—TRINITY COLLEGE—THE LIBRARY—BRIAN BOROO'S HARP—ROSY-FINGERED PEGGY—BERLIN PANCAKES—PETTICOAT-LANE—MONSTER SHOPS—ST. PATRICK'S CATHEDRAL—SWIFT'S GRAVE—IRISH BEGGARS—A DRIVER'S COSTUME—THE LIBERTIES—DONNY-BROOK FAIR—WINNING THE GARTERS—A BRAVE IRISHMAN—ENGLISH VIEWS OF IRELAND—ONLY ONE HALFPENNY—SINGING AND FIGHTING—RETURN TO TRINITY—PADDY—OLIVER GOLDSMITH'S ROOM.

I HAD one very pleasant duty to perform in Dublin. I had not yet seen a friend whom I knew to be at present in the city. Mr. Farquhar—as honest an English lad as ate roast-beef and drank old ale—had been my chum at Heidelberg, and was now in his fourteenth term at Trinity College; for his father, a rich London merchant, had discovered that the merry under-graduates of Magdalene College, Cambridge, proved as great an obstacle to his son's studies, as the romantic scenery and cheap wine of Heidelberg had been. On a fine morning, then, I bent my steps to Trinity, thinking that my friend must be happy here, where the scenery is no less romantic than at Heidelberg, and the students are not a bit less jolly than those at Cambridge.

On entering the college, I saw a broad, quiet, cleanly quadrangle, in the centre of which rises a stately turreted building. The long vacation had just begun, and the wide courts looked somewhat empty. To my great satis-

faction, however, I learned from the porter, that Mr. Farquhar had not gone "down," but was reading hard. The whole building produced on me the effect of a fortress; the gate was closed behind me, and thick walls separated me from the noise and streets of other mortals. Over me were vaulted arches; before me antique buildings shut out the view; and Trinity College has ever been a citadel—a citadel for the freedom and honour of science and investigation. In the midst of the flood of revolutions and counter-revolutions, of error, passion, and fanaticism, it has afforded a secure asylum for the silent contemplation of learned men.

A rather aged person, with cunning face and a costume which appeared to be his property more through chance than choice, had been hitherto lying on the ground, letting the morning sun shine on him.

"Get up, Patrick!" the porter shouted, "you have slept long enough; get up and find Mr. Farquhar."

Patrick got up, rubbed his eyes, yawned, and growled, "Long enough, indeed! Are three hours long enough? I didn't lie down till four this morning. Long enough—oh, indeed!"

Then he moved away. On his right foot he had a Wellington boot, on to the top of which the remains of a pair of brown trousers were thrust; on the other, however, he had a slipper, which must once have glistened gloriously with braid and gold thread. His coat was sky blue, but it had received many earthly stains in contests with dishes, and porter bottles, and mud. The right coat-tail had met with the most enviable fate: it had gone, never to return; it had sundered itself from the sinful coat, and allowed a sight of that terribly ragged portion of his clothing where holes are least permissible,

while the left tail oscillated mournfully on the other part.

Patrick went off, and the porter employed the time to do honour to the stranger. He led me into the chapel, a venerable and extremely simple building, and thence to the refectory, where the solidity of the tables and chairs spoke well for the prowess of the fellows and scholars wont to assemble here to dine. The porter sought to arouse and gratify my admiration for the pulpit in one corner of the hall. "Look, sir," he said, in a voice in which I could easily read the struggle going on between the noble cicerone nature in his bosom and the less noble motives Mr. Farquhar's approach made him feel, "that is the pulpit from which grace is said; it is formed like a wine-cup, and surrounded with vine leaves—all carved in wood, most artistically."

I had stepped forward to examine the pulpit, which was really worth inspection, and he began rattling his keys, with the evident design of conducting me to the kitchen. With this man I could have made the voyage round the world in eight-and-forty hours. At this moment, however, I heard a voice, and turning round, saw my friend. Our meeting was most cordial.

"Come along to my rooms," he said, "and do honour to our meeting; we will talk about Heidelberg, the Three Crowns, and the Red Boatman. Hallo, Patrick!"

Patrick had laid himself down again, and covering his eyes with his hands to guard them from the malicious sport of the morning sun, seemed to have sunk once more into the sleep of the righteous. At any rate, he did not answer.

"I have no time now," I implored, for I knew my friend's passion for impromptu breakfasts. "This evening.

Let us employ the short morning left us in a walk through the buildings."

This decision seemed anything but pleasant to the parties concerned; the porter retired with a face of resignation into the shadow of the lodge, while my friend said, with a deep sigh, "Well, we will begin our march." The sigh was evidently designed for the first room we entered. It was the Examination Hall; and many a reminiscence worth sighing at probably occurred to my friend on seeing the wooden tables, and the names which so many luckless fellows have carved on them in the agony of their hearts. The walls are adorned with portraits of Trinity College celebrities; the post of honour being occupied by the founder, the most gracious Queen Elizabeth. "Does she not look, in her wig and stiff collar, exactly like a disguised M.A.? I don't like women who can make Latin verses." Fortunately for my friend, scanning Latin verses is no longer a portion of our ladies' toilet duties, or he would often enough be embarrassed!

If Mr. Farquhar felt so uncomfortable in the hollow silence of the academic purgatory, he breathed the more freely when we walked out again into the sunshine and fresh air. "Thank the Lord!" he said to himself more than to me. "Where shall we go now—to the kitchen or the library?" With such a limited choice I decided on the latter. After crossing the quadrangle, we entered a large hall, on whose walls stood marble busts on black brackets. There stood Francis Bacon, the philosopher of the ante-chamber, with curling hair, coquettish Henri Quatre beard, and triple collar; there was the noble, God-fearing Milton; Shakspeare, with the divinely bold and loving face; the serious, thoughtful Burke, with his thin

lips and compressed mouth ; Newton, with the narrow, reverend head ; Locke, the free-thinker, with naked throat and tall brow ; and Goldsmith, with his wide forehead. I was most attracted by Swift's bust. I stood opposite it like an old acquaintance, like a man whose sufferings we know, and whose confessions have enabled us to read his face. Swift's countenance is powerful and full, it is the adequate expression of his mind. The nose is large, the bushy brows are contracted over the eyes, and an unspoken word of sovereign pride plays round his elegant and pouting lips. There is nothing of love in this face, all in it is strength, enjoyment, arrogance. This is the face of the Doctor Swift, who terrorised the Court, the Tory Ministry, and all London, for three years ; but the face of the Dean of St. Patrick, who killed Vanessa and lost Stella, must have looked very different.

From this vestibule we proceeded up-stairs to the small, though snug reading-room, and thence to the MS. department, whose shelves are rich in treasures for Irish history, art, and antiquities. Here is the valuable "book of Kells ;" here, too, are the "Brehon laws" or the commented law-books of the old national judges of Ireland. Very curious is the way in which the old Irish preserved valuable documents : they employed quadrangular metal boxes, with covers more or less adorned ; such a case was called a *cumthach*. Very splendid is the *cumthach* in which is preserved the "green sacred book," an old copy of the gospels, written by St. Dimma, about the year 620, and one of the oldest MSS. in existence. The case in which these yellow parchment leaves, with their faded pictures, have passed an existence of twelve centuries, is made of silver. On the cover is a cross, the centre

occupied by a white crystal; the corners are adorned with blue stones in silver setting, while on the back of the case is a representation of the Crucifixion in relieve.

Among many old arms, drinking-horns, and elk bones, the most interesting article to me was an ancient harp, justly regarded as extremely sacred. It belonged to the last King of Ireland, Brian Boroo, renowned in fable, who fell by a Danish hand at the battle of Clontarf in 1014. With this king the empire was rent asunder, and when his son Donogh, after killing his brother Tighe, fled to Rome, he took this harp with him among his father's regalia, and presented it to the Pope, in order to obtain absolution and a blessing from him. Harp-playing, fratricide, and papal absolution have ever been the sad incessantly recurring ingredients of Irish history. Brian Boroo's harp rotted in the Vatican, until the Pope presented it, as a sign of his favour, to the first Earl of Clanricarde, in whose family it remained till the beginning of the last century. Thence, after changes of owners, it reached its present resting-place, where it is honoured as a national relic. You can see on this harp its eight hundred years of existence. The lower end has been broken off, and restored in stone; the oak frame is decorated with quaint figures and emblems: you find the "bloody hand," the favourite attribute of the Irish heroes; the wolf-dog of the old Finian poetry; trefoil and silver-work, which has grown black with age; while on the top is the white crystal set in silver, so generally employed as a decoration by old Irish art. There it stands, nevertheless, without sound, without chord, the oldest and only harp I saw in Ireland, for the sweet science of sound has died out in the country which was once its sunny home.

The harp that once through Tara's halls
The light of music shed,
Now hangs neglected on those walls
As if that soul were dead.

My friend Farquhar, who had hitherto maintained a reverential silence, became all life and eloquence again when we proceeded to the kitchen. After going down a few broad and clean steps, we entered a tall and well-lighted room, full of the most glorious savours. Before the enormous fire the chains already rolled in which the sirloins would be roasted; while the white-nightcapped cook was softly slumbering on a stool a short distance off. "Hillo, boy!" Mr. Farquhar shouted, "don't let the meat burn." The poor fellow started up alarmed from his dream. "Where, where?" he said, still half asleep; but he was soon set at ease by Mr. Farquhar's laugh and the quiescent state of the chains. In the mean while all the kitchen maids gathered round my friend, with whom he, in consideration of their weighty position at the academic hearth, seemed to stand on the most collegiate footing. "Look here," he said, with a pathos, half resulting from his own enthusiasm, half from the reflexion of the quietly burning fire, "here you are in the divine singer's true world; up there we may read Homer and try to understand him half way, but we never get beyond the abstract, the idea, and the lexicon. Here below are reality, life, and truth—here you see the entire colony of the Phæacians round you—here the broad-horned oxen—here the rosy-fingered Peggy, our brown scullery-maid, and there at the fire the spit revolves." Peggy, whose rosy fingers had just massacred a pigeon, escaped from the arms of this great interpreter of Homer, and shouted, "Eh, Mr. Farquhar, what a good humour ye're in!" That he was; surrounded by kitchen hussars, he stood

like a general before action, and his eye rolled, in the consciousness of victory, from the beef to the mutton. "Do your best to-day," he then said to the assembled Phæacians of Trinity College, "here is an esteemed guest from foreign parts, and Erin-go-bragh!"

With these words he dragged me from the roast-meat atmosphere back to the golden freshness of a summer morning; and I had work in defending myself against the symposium he proposed on the spot: "What," he said, in a tone of annoyance, "you wish to disgrace me by not being my hall guest this afternoon? Reflect that you are now in the country celebrated for hospitality, and what a disgrace it would be to me if people learned that a German student were here and had not dined with me." When I at length convinced him that the time I could devote to Dublin was too limited for such indulgence, he walked for a while silently behind me, till he all at once seized my arm, and said, "Stop! I have an idea." We crossed Carlyle Bridge and entered Sackville-street. He led me into a very pleasant confectioner's shop, and very pleasant bright-eyed girls welcomed my friend as he whispered something significant to one of them. Before long she came to us, placing before each a plate, on which lay—a Berlin pancake.

"What do you say to that?" asked my friend, and his face glistened as it had done before the college fire.

"I am dumb," was my reply.

"And what would Madame Thiele, of the Goldene Kette, in Heidelberg, say if——" The rest was lost in the mouthful my friend took. "From you, however, I hope and expect," he continued, when able to draw breath again, "that on your return home you will proclaim it from the house-tops, 'It was Mr. Farquhar

who introduced Berlin pancakes into the Emerald Isle.' ”

Which duty of gratitude I here perform in behoof of all my travelling successors in the Green Island.

We left the shop in a far more consolatory temper, and walked along through Dublin street life. In those parts of the city which are not primevally old you can see that they were colonised from London during a certain period : there are a Temple-bar, a Fleet-street, a Drury-lane, and King William-street, just as in London, though they are not so grand or so populated. There is, too, a Petticoat-lane here ; but I must confess that the Petticoat-lane in London looks like a poor counterfeit of its fellow in Dublin. The former must be only a colony, populated and enlivened from Ireland, the home of rags and pedlars. I will not assert that the Dublin rags are much cleaner and more pleasant than those of London ; but there are, so to speak, more idealised rags. The former are prosaic, disgusting, shudder-arousing rags : stockings torn from the feet of a corpse found in the Thames mud—a handkerchief and cap a drunken fellow lost in the dark arches of the Adelphi—faded silk skirts in which a heroine of the Argyle, who died in the spital, was once arrayed. There are no silk skirts in the Dublin Petticoat-lane. The Irish people does not know the vice which lives in silk till it dies one day, half naked, in the gutter, or, as a penitent sinner, enters the comfortable cells and shaded gardens of the St. James's Refuge. The rags of Dublin are of another quality. This frieze jacket, which, seen by daylight, is rather a hole than a jacket, an old beggar-woman from Finglas wore till her death, and her heirs sold it to the old clo'man for a penny ; but the old beggar-woman from Finglas was a celebrated

thaumaturge, who cured goats and children with equal infallibility, and of whom it was whispered that she was on intimate terms with the fairies that live under Howth cromlech. These boots—not worth twopence—were once worn by a peasant from Antrim, a descendant of the princely O'Neills. The legs were torn by the thorns under which the rebels of Dundrum concealed themselves, and the soles were left behind in the bogs where the last Gallowglasses bled to death. And then the pedlar himself—he does not look as if ashamed of his shop. He stands with the conscio sness of a noble deed under his rags fluttering in the morning breeze. Ireland's castles and abbeys lie in ruins, Ireland's crown is eaten away by rust and dirt, Ireland's royal cloak, Ireland's banners are torn in a thousand flitters, and he deals in the rags, the mouldiness, and the rust. He carries Ireland's relics to market—in his sense he is also a martyr. And when the breeze slightly raises the moth-eaten uniforms and reddish-brown boots over his signboard, you read his name, and see that he is an O'Donnell; and who can forbid you regarding this prince of rags for a moment with sorrow? I do not think I exaggerate when I say that I passed through twenty such streets, which, narrow as they were, were hung from top to bottom with old clothes. I especially remember that boots of every variety, colour, and form were suspended along with shirts and clothes from poles in the garret windows, and thus formed the strangest canopy beneath whose shadow men ever walked.

After nearly an hour's stroll through this world of rags, which began to lose its romance from its want of termination, I reached again broader and cleaner streets, where I was suddenly pulled up by another appearance,

as peculiar to the capital of Ireland as the rag-market. I allude to the monster shops, occupying half a street, and which in their internal arrangements have no parallel even in London. Ten or twelve enormous show-windows, often of the height of two stories, look on the street, and present to the passer-by objects which stand in no connexion, and are never found elsewhere in such conjunction. The first window makes you believe you are standing in front of an upholsterer's. In the midst of pretty paper-hangings, a velvet sofa and easy-chair stretch out their well-stuffed arms to the weary wanderer outside, while a silk-covered four-poster in the background and a softly rocking cradle offer the prospect of a happy family life. The second window, however, leads you into other regions, for the whole art of shoe-making—from the Lilliputian child's shoe and the dancing-slipper to the hard-soled, knee-protecting hunting-boot—is represented, in order to show you what a long and weary road you must travel ere the greatly desired prize floats over your head—namely, that dainty lady's slipper. The following seven windows resemble the seven paradises of the old Irish myths, for all the latter promise the heroes, the former are prepared to bestow on the ladies: beauty, the magic of love, eternal youth, purity of mind and body, incessant delight and celestial peace, in golden beakers, ball-dresses, girdles and veils, patchouli and Jockey Club, soap and freckle water, nets and Parisian bonnets, silver-plated teapots, and corner dishes of Britannia metal. The other three windows contain in a motley row all that is otherwise useful and agreeable for life: papier-mâché tables, polished fire shovels, and straw brooms. In short, Schiller's "Song of the Bell" cannot more perfectly illustrate the changing wants, joys

and sorrows of human life, than the twelve show-windows of a Dublin monster shop do, for—not to forget the effective conclusion—the last window was draped in black, and black ribbons, black caps, black clothes, and black gloves announced that care was taken for the last event in which human short-comings can place us.

There are some six of these monster shops in Dublin, and the period of their first establishment dates shortly after the great famine of 1847, so that the original plan appears to have been to collect the largest amount of workmen and capital, in order to do away with competition, and secure constant work and good wages. In one of these shops I inspected, in addition to those working out of doors, there were more than four hundred persons employed, among them thirty milliners, exclusively engaged in making alterations, and so on. The public seemed to patronise these shops; long rows of carriages were at the doors, and the crowd, composed of all classes of society and in all imaginable costumes, passing from one shop to the other amid the most varying objects, was so attractive and picturesque, that the character of Dublin street life seemed for a moment cheerful.

And in this temper my friend left me for a while that I might visit St. Patrick's Cathedral, while he revelled in the fleshpots of Trinity College. I enjoyed this moment of solitude doubly, because a longing, rather than curiosity, drew me to the cathedral. The church and the deanery were the spots in which Swift, after his last star had set with Stella, spent the remainder of his life in solitude, in that deep night, which at length mercifully veiled for ever this tortured mind.

In the nave between the broad arches, which rest on massive pillars, hang the arms of the deceased Knights of

St. Patrick, on the monotonous background of the whitewashed walls; and under the stones on which I stood, rests a man who may also be called a Knight of St. Patrick, Jonathan Swift, and by his side Hesther Johnson, dust to dust. Well, peace be with their ashes! Banners and weapons do not hang over the resting-place of these poor martyrs of love and life: behind the second pillar you see a white slab, surrounded by reeds and olive branches; and at the top where they meet, a ghastly, gibbering death's-head. The design was Swift's, and the inscription was composed by him.

On leaving the church, I proceeded to the graveyard. I stood on one of the tombstones in the tall grass, and looked over the wall at the square gloomy house, with the wide closed windows, in which Swift lived, suffered, and died, with his eye on the cathedral and the graves.

When I returned to my car, I found a crowd of idlers, children and old women, assembled, who looked to me like beggars, though my driver had not the air of a man who had much to bestow in charity, for his dress was of the strangest form and colour, and the only thing that produced any affinity in this want of continuity was that it was entirely composed of rags and tatters. To a tail-coat, which had once been green, a right arm, once brown, was attached, but not so firmly as not to let a ray of shirt peer through, while the nudity of the elbow proved that the indispensable garment did not reach so far down. The left sleeve had once belonged to a great coat, and though the garment bore a likeness upwards to a tail-coat, at the lower part it was lost in fragments of most fantastic outline. And so it went on—the right boot was not a match with the left, and they bore a striking resemblance

to that memorable pair, consisting of a dancing-slipper and a Wellington, which the Boots of the Golden Lamb, at Vienna, brought the impatient traveller, saying : "Look ye, gracious sir, there is something queer to-day, for there is just such another pair down there."

When I drew nearer, I found my driver engaged in a violent war of words with the crowd of beggars. He was evidently striving to drive them away, so that I might not be incommoded. But his philanthropic exertions were badly requited. At a distance I could see an old crone, who stepped forward with upraised crutch, shrieking : "Nothing will be left of you, but the delight of the poor, when you are swept off the earth." The driver had just raised his brown sleeve and his whip to thank the old woman for her salute, when I walked up, and the state of siege was at once converted into the happiest peace. "Fine weather to-day, sir, God be thanked!" all cried, and collected round me. One of the old women hobbled up and said : "Give me a trifle, yer honour, that the young ladies may love you?" Then came another, and said : "Your honour will be pleased to give me a penny for a glass of whisky?" But my honour was pleased to remark that I intended to give nothing for whisky, whereupon she continued : "Then give me something for the love of God?" And when the woman with the crutch, my driver's friend, came up and received her penny, she raised her hands as if to bless me, and said, with much pathos : "May those soft, brown, good eyes, never see anything to trouble them." Nothing so pleasant had ever been wished my eyes before ; and I must confess that, in a country where the language of daily life, where every salute, every thanksgiving, every curse, is, in its way, a poem, and even begging

is carried on in a poetic form, it is a melancholy pleasure to give so long as the scanty pence last out, for, unfortunately, there is no end of begging, in and out of Dublin.

My driver, however, whom all this seemed to insult in his heart's core, gave his horse the blow he designed for the cursing beggar, and with a contemptuous glance at her he drove off, while the blessings of the crowd followed me for a while. He took me to a sorrowful portion of the city, what are called the "Liberties," whose former, and still partially visible, splendour, forms a most pitiable contrast with the state in which the denizens now are. Formerly in the enjoyment of numerous privileges and liberties, this high-lying district contained a population of about forty thousand souls, who made a good living by the manufacture of silk and wool, introduced here by the French Protestants, who fled their country after the revocation of the Edict of Nantes. Rich merchants from London soon joined them, and, ere long, all who were rich and respected in Dublin lived in these streets. Three thousand four hundred looms for wool, twelve hundred for silk, were in activity, till the French revolution of 1791 gave this prosperous manufacture the first blow, the Irish revolution of '98 the last. Since then the looms have stood still ; since then the rich have retired to the low land round the sea, and the fine stone houses they inhabited are decaying. The walls have been broken down, the roofs have sunk in, and boards, instead of windows, hang in the stone frames ; piles of dust have collected before the houses, and muddy water stands in the rotting doorways. In these holes the most wretched and pitiable labourers imaginable live ; they often lie by hundreds together on the bare ground ; and often, too, the rag-festooned mob used to descend to

the city. With the wildness of hunger in their eyes, with their pale faces, and dirty hair, they resembled a foreign horde. But the shopkeeper of Sackville-street knew them, and did not feel comfortable when he saw the mob thronging madly past. "Those are people from the Liberties," he said, as he put up his shutters; for when the Liberty men came, there was riot, tumult, and confusion. Fortunately these have become rarer and rarer, and since Victoria has reigned, have entirely disappeared.

Thus evening came on, and if the air had before benefited me by its purity and mildness, it now became truly reviving; for simultaneously with sunset comes the fresh sea breeze, and an immediate coolness fills the streets and houses, even after the hottest summer days. I had scarce returned to my hotel ere Mr. Farquhar arrived with two friends, one of whom, a pleasant lad, with attractive features, was a descendant of the great Addison.

"We must not lose any time," Mr. Farquhar said, who had appointed himself master of the revels; "this is the last day of Donnybrook Fair, and it would be unpardonable did we not allow our German friend to see the Irish rogue in all his glory."

We jumped on a car and drove off in the best spirits. We passed through long streets that seemed deserted, for all were going out into the country. Only the maid-servants, apparently left at home to keep house, looked out of the open windows, and kissed their hands to the passers-by. So soon as we reached the high road, matters grew very amusing. Vehicle rolled after vehicle, horses trotted along, all veiled in a tremendous dust-cloud, whose end was not visible, but which the setting sun, with its blood-red hue, invested with the

strangest colours and forms. All seemed swimming, rather than walking, in a stream of lava ; all appeared to be raised from the earth and soaring in a fairy-like cloud. But, "deeply rooted in the ground," two constables stood opposite each other at every ten paces, who reminded us that our excursion might have its earthly termination. The further we went the more romantic grew the crowd, the wilder the confusion, and the more insane our driver ; but, at the same time, the number of armed men on both sides the way increased. When we at length stopped, and descending from our cloud and our car, entered Donnybrook, drunkards of both sexes were reeling about and striving to be pleasant to the new arrivals in their fashion. The houses of the village were lit up, and fun was going on galore. On the ground floor there was drinking, singing, kissing, and love-making, cursing, and fighting ; while in the upper floor dancing went on. In and before these places the number of constables and soldiers was remarkable. At the end of the village is a walled-in and spacious grass-plot ; that is the real spot for the most renowned, or rather most notorious, of all popular jollity in Ireland, Donnybrook Fair, which has been held here since days of yore in the last days of August. Here took place the most sanguinary fights, the most obstinate rows, the most accidental homicides in Ireland—ay, in the United Kingdom. Hence, the government tried long ago to put a stop to it. It was supposed that the privilege of holding the fair was connected with the ground behind the wall, so it was bought up, and the gates were locked. But a popular lawyer proved that the privilege was *not* connected with the soil, and the government was compelled to open the gates again, and the scandal was

renewed, and continues to this day. English red-coats with shouldered and loaded muskets, patrol on the fair-ground; mounted constabulary are posted in front of the walls, and the entire road, more than three miles long, leading to Dublin, is on both sides more thickly covered with policemen than houses.

When we walked through the narrow gateway on to the trampled grass plot, we were speedily surrounded by an indescribable throng of men, women, children, sounds, and smells; and a thousand twinkling lights greeted us through the gloaming. A donkey was tied up to the wall, in whose shadow three old women lay, smoking in silent happiness their short dirty pipes. Then we forced our way into a long street of tents, in which porcelain and glass wares of the commonest description, glistening splendidly in the glare of the smoky lamps, were eagerly surveyed, and more eagerly purchased by the gaping crowd. Between the stalls were gambling-tables, round which a dense mob was collected to enjoy the glorious sight. The game was played on a table, surrounded by all sorts of pedlar's wares, the best perhaps not worth a penny. In the middle of the painted table was a hand, which the owner of the establishment turned so soon as the stakes were put down. The number to which it pointed when it stopped, gained. Unfortunately it so happened that the hand never pointed to the numbers in which pence were staked, for the boy throned on an uplifted chest high above the variations of his gambling-table, not only set the hand in motion, but managed to stop it at the right moment. After which he collected the halfpence, and then threw them in a bag he wore round his waist.

As we felt inclined to tempt Dame Fortune at Donny-

brook, we offered to put down a trifling stake, on condition that the owner promised to keep his hand quiet. The boy evidenced a hard struggle between avarice and self-denial, but he ended it more quickly than usually happens in the events of human life. We staked and twirled the hand; when it made its last revolutions we saw what restraint our good banker put on himself not to give it a quiet shove, but it was too late, the hand had stopped, and Mr. Farquhar had won a pair of garters of red cloth and blue beads. As he swung them over his head, and shouted, "Who will have them?" a band of women and girls flocked round him, striving for the garters with the most endearing expressions. But the rivalry grew momentarily greater: for others now came up from adjoining tables, where an army of thirsty apprentices and dirty street-sweepers were drinking from an effervescing machine a beverage which, to heighten its natural charms, was dyed red with a drop of what was called raspberry-vinegar: "My good, handsome, sir!"—"Young noble, sir!"—"No, I!"—"My darling gentleman!"—"No, I, your honour!" Not one of them, however, was more eager than a deliciously pretty girl, not more than seventeen. She was a sort of wild beauty, who was probably born and brought up in a ditch, for she was as lovely and fiery as she was dirty and ragged. She worked her way through the crowd, raising her arms, which over the dark hair of the surroundings looked full and dainty in the coming gloom. As she stood thus before us, all glowing with eagerness and exertion, her cheeks dark red, her black eyes full of passion, her long hair hanging over her neck, Farquhar said to her, "But, my dear child, what do you want with garters? why, you haven't any stockings on!"

“Oh, my dear sir,” the girl stammered, in short sentences, her bosom heaving audibly, “on Sunday—when I—go to church—I wear—shoes and stockings.”

“But the price is a kiss, my darling,” said Farquhar, again waving the red garters with the blue beads. The poor child was plainly in the deepest embarrassment—she looked down, then turned, and seemed asking her friends’ advice. The latter giggled, whispered, and at length pushed her forward by nudging her in the side. Farquhar took advantage of the moment and printed on the lips of the wild, lovely being, a kiss so loud that it could be heard above the droning of the distant pipes, and all the buzzing around us. Just as he was handing the beauty the garters, a powerful young fellow emerged from another group, which had been shooting arrows for a prize of a pint or half-pint of bitter beer, according to the stake; he must have been very lucky, for he had drunk many a pint and half-pint, and could scarce stand on his legs, which did not prevent him, however, cursing and yelling. “Death and the devil!” he shouted, “who kissed my Nelly?” With that he threw his bow on the ground, seized a shillelah, the national staff of the Irish, from a bystander, and swung it over his head. “I say, who kissed my Nelly?” he yelled again, striking the ground with his stick, so that the dust flew up. I felt alarmed when I saw the madman staggering towards Nelly; he seized the poor child by the arm so violently that she screamed, and he shouted, “Who kissed you?” He represented my ideal of a backwoods savage. My friends, however, were better acquainted with this sort of Irish wildness than I was.

“How do you dare, you drunken scoundrel,” Farquhar

thundered at him, "to make such a row here? What do you want? Out with it!"

The Irish hero was silent for a moment, then he said, but so gently that it was hardly audible, "I'll kill you—you and that Englishman." His comrades, to whom this last political allusion appeared to be dangerous, surrounded him, caught hold of his legs and arms, and tried to drag him away. When he felt himself thus in safety, and spared any aggressive movement, his courage grew again, and spasmodically brandishing his shillelah, he shouted, "Who kissed my Nelly? Show me the villain, the Englishman, and I will kill him before you all." In the mean while the police had come up, the mob dispersed, and we could go on.

"There you have," Farquhar remarked, "the prototype of this nation: ruffians and boasters, so long as they know they are safe, wretched cowards and runaways, when matters grow serious. And so they all are."

"Don't forget," another of our party said, eagerly, "that our worthy Farquhar is an Englishman, and gained his whole knowledge of the Irish from the *Times* leaders; and if there is a paper whose Irish politics seem to consist in maliciously fostering the ill-will between both nations, it is the *Times*; it has had opportunities at important moments to work in a conciliating spirit, but it only employed them to render the hatred greater. I know the Irish people, I am an Irishman by birth, and feel proud of being able to say it. If the Irish are no longer the chivalrous people they were, the fault is with the English, who rendered them what they now are. It is not right to make a nation responsible for that which it has become through the crime or fault of another."

"Bravo! my dear O'Keane; no new dispute, though,

on our old theme," Farquhar said, good humouredly, as he threw his arm round his shorter, dark-haired friend. The latter slowly liberated himself, and followed us silently for some distance. The rear of this nocturnal scene was occupied by shows, lit up with gigantic pitch torches; the massacre of Cawnpore, a monkey and a dog theatre, and a human theatre which was not much better. Among the actors was the piper from Howth, in his Highland garb, and he must have been a great favourite of the populace, for in the midst of his musical employment, some one would every moment come up to kiss and hug him, which did not improve his melody. The admission was one halfpenny; we felt tempted to witness the performance so highly and hoarsely belauded by the gaily bedizened actors, and went into the fog-laden, evil-smelling booth. The benches were occupied by ragged men, women, and children, who played us all sorts of tricks; as we tried to squeeze our way to the front, at one moment we felt ourselves held by the coat, then another took our hat or stick, and we were glad to emerge from these perils by our pleasant demeanour. In the corner close to the stage sat an aged crone selling green apples and gingerbread as hard as stones, and puffing the smoke from her glimmering pipe on to the stage; the heroes and heroines were conversing most affably with the audience, and the Ghost, who had hitherto been standing outside, forced his way through the mob with his elbows, disappeared behind the curtain, and the next moment arose from the grave, his lighted pipe still visible in his waistcoat-pocket. The piece had its regular five acts; fortunately none lasted more than three minutes, and after the termination of the tragedy the tyrant and his daughter, the nun who became a princess, the crafty evil

councillor, and the genial lover descended from the stage, and proceeded in solemn procession to the front, where they danced to the bagpipes an eight-handed reel, which was less national and characteristic than the jig. We joined the exodus, and thus managed to reach the open air.

On walking out, we were strangely affected by the brilliancy of the lights and the full lustre of the moon, while the fresh night-breeze seemed to give us new spirits, after emerging from the pestiferous hole in which the Irish people were so delighted. We went to the dancing-booths, where, to the sound of a fiddle or bagpipes, and by the light of an oil-lamp, all seemed very merry. The floor consisted of a square board laid on the grass; and while the two or three dancers performed on this, the musician walked round it. At a table in the back sat half a dozen drunken toppers singing with hoarse throats the "Sprig of Shillelah."

In the mean while a singer had entered, who accompanied his ditty on the fiddle. His song was of a more melancholy sort, and seemed greatly to please the assembled mob: for the whole party joined in chorus at the affecting passages. The song was of true home-breed, and grew out of the soil on which we were standing at the moment. It celebrated the former glories of Donnybrook Fair, and lamented its present decadence.

Scarce had the last mournful "Ullulala, och!" died away, ere a terrible yelling was heard from an adjoining tent. As was immediately proved, a drunken fellow there had drawn his knife on a comrade who was in no better state, and the hands of those who tried to separate them were already stained with blood, when a patrol of soldiers marched up to arrest the culprit, who had behaved too nobly for Donnybrook Fair of the present day. The

old woman and the mob, who had just been so enthusiastic over the song, muttered a little about bad times and English tyranny, but in a very low voice ; and Mr. Farquhar, who noticed, among the excited people, Nelly with the garters and her gallant with the shillelah, recommended a start. He said that the hour had arrived when the innocent might suffer for the guilty, and although the German public were wont to ask a great deal from their authors, they could hardly expect they would let themselves be thrashed for their greater amusement ; and as we had no objection to offer, we jumped on to the first car, and returned to Dublin through the long dusk-cloud which the moon now lit up.

When we stopped at the gateway of Trinity we found it closed. After some hammering, Paddy made his appearance, half asleep.

“What, at it again?” Farquhar called to him. “This man’s life is made up of drinking and sleeping.”

“And yer honour takes care there is a great deal more of one than the other,” was the laconic reply.

In the mean while we had entered the quadrangle ; the moon illumined Paddy’s pleasant face.

“Look at this individual,” my friend said ; “on what he lives, only the gods know, who often have the elevating spectacle of seeing him fighting with our dogs for the bones Peggy throws away. His couch is that covered corner under the gateway, his pillow is a calm conscience, and his blanket, according to the hour, sun or moonshine. He settled here as a free genius, and his disposition makes him a servant. If Dickens knew him, he would hail him as own brother of Boots at the Holly-tree Inn ; and if the boot-cleaners of Heidelberg were aware of his existence, they would elect him an honorary member of their guild.”

“Mr. Farquhar is very extravagant with his praise ; I wish he was so too with his sixpences,” Paddy said, most dryly, as he lit the candle awaiting us on a bench.

We then proceeded to the rooms of the gentleman I have introduced to my reader as a descendant of the great Addison. The portrait of his ancestor hung in a gilded frame over his work-table ; but the room in which we were was in all respects celebrated. Oliver Goldsmith, the most good tempered, the truest hearted, in a certain sense the noblest of English humorists, had slept in it about a hundred years ago. Not so long ago, a frame was pointed out in this room—the hail or a careless student has broken it—on which Oliver Goldsmith cut his name with a diamond ring.

Addison and Goldsmith were the Penates of that evening, and the wanderer, in the protection of such spirits, and in the midst of such friends, felt most comfortable, and looked to the future with a certain sense of delight. Paddy quickly spread the board, and the red flame of the urn diffused a homely light over the scene. It was late when we parted. My friends accompanied me to the gateway, with a thousand wishes for my welfare. There lay a shapeless rolled-up mass, which threw a heavy shadow into the moonlight. It was Paddy, who had retired to his usual sleeping-place.

CHAPTER III.

WICKLOW—IRISH SCENERY—THE VILLAGE MAIDEN—THE SUGAR-LOAVES
—THE DESERTED VILLAGE—THE CABIN—HEDGE SCHOOLS—THE
PENAL CODE—THE DEVIL'S GLEN—THE FAIRIES—THE BEALTAINÉ—
THE SANCTUARY—ANNAMOE—IRISH HOSPITALITY—ARRIVAL AT
GLENDALOUGH.

DUBLIN was quiet as I left it, the atmosphere was most delicious and pure, and the solitary wanderer was soon to feel its regenerating effect. For the train had scarcely moved out of the wooden station, ere the Wicklow mountains rose to the right; green mounds enlivened the foreground, while pleasant undulating hills faded away like blue clouds on the horizon. To the left far below us heaved the green sea of Ireland, and sunshine was woven in the crisped curls of the waves. Towns and villages, peacefully emerging on the land side, were not absent. The pleasant little town of Bray, with its Gothic house, next appeared under umbrageous trees, in an inlet under the hills. Not without reason is it called Bray the Splendid, for splendid, indeed, is the view hence of land and sea.

My destination was Wicklow, about two hours' ride from Dublin. It is very favourably situated behind a belt of rocks, which form an excellent natural harbour. A

river fit for inland navigation runs into it ; but despite these various advantages a deadly silence reigns in the port. A few small vessels and rafts certainly lay there ; but they rather heightened the melancholy inactivity than dispelled it. An old bridge with grey arches leads over the river, and the city runs up the side of a sloping hill, the top of which is crowned by the cathedral with its neatly-shaped tower.

After a substantial breakfast, I put on my knapsack and started cheerily for the mountains. My road ran through a thick alley of beeches. A sacred shade spread out above me, while on both sides lay fertile land with ploughed fields and meadows. County Wicklow is, indeed, the garden of Ireland ; and forests still stand here in their old splendour. All over the rest of Ireland, once so gloriously overshadowed by reverend clumps, they have disappeared, and naked, smooth-shorn hill-tops, which at present only soothe the eye by their picturesque forms and grouping, close in the horizon with their near or remote ranges.

A few neat villages, which stood isolated, but partly on the verge of the forest, had been actively traversed ; many a single house, standing out sharply from the dark background with the fuchsia bushes that adorned its walls ; many a quiet farm on a stream, had caused me to delay by the way. The road had imperceptibly risen, and I had attained a higher region. A gloomy pine-wood indicated the cessation of the forest ; it stood there like a lost advanced post, and frowned upon an arid plain, stretching as far as eye could reach. All now changed : what had become of my lovely fairyland ? where was my beautiful forest in the fulness of its glory ? The heath lay there, solitary and monotonous, in the burning sun-

shine; the surrounding mountains had assumed a bluish-red tinge. The nearer I drew to them the more naked they appeared. Only at a few spots had a fragment of wood saved its life, either at the foot, the centre, or the brow; all the rest looked bare and wretched. And the forms of those mountains are so soft, so varying, so melodious! but they grow solitary as you approach them. The road is broad, good, and firm. I walked this day at least fifteen miles, and after leaving the pine-wood behind me, I passed through but three small wretched villages, and at the most met four carts and not twenty human beings. I did not see a single soul among them, male or female, big or little, who had on a decent coat, reputable trousers, cloak, dress, or shoes. All was torn, all hung in tatters about them, and no longer resembled an article of clothing: the rags hanging loosely together, are often so transparent, that the naked legs are visible through them. Oh, why were the forests cut down!

I halted in the middle of the heath on an elevation, and seated myself on the heated ground under a blackberry-bush, which offered me its scanty shade. The mountains were not far off; their form stood out in sharp outline. They were conically shaped, and grouped round a large one in the centre, which, terminating in a point, sank to the plain with broad and large spurs. All was still and calm, the clouds threw their alternating shadows over the blue mountains, and the heath assumed strange colours in the sunshine. Then came thin dry meadows on the slope and poor fields; but splendid cattle grazed in the valleys; fat, lustrous cows and oxen, of a splendid brown and black colour. The herd, armed with a gun, sat in the distance on the slope, with his dog standing near him; under the dark fir-trees of the plateau was a

school-house ; then, at the bottom, a few poor straw-roofed cabins—nothing else for miles.

“A fine warm day this, the Virgin be praised !”

I started from my reverie : an Irish maid was passing by ; she had a large straw hat on, and heavy boots on her feet. She could not be more than sixteen ; she was seated on a heavily loaded donkey, and her feet hung down with her heavy boots. She had greeted me with her dark blue eyes.

“Fine weather, the Lord be thanked,” I replied, awaking from my dream ; “whither away, girl ?”

“To the heath, where my father’s cabin stands.”

“What’s your name, then, little one ?”

“Isabella Macleod, the schoolmaster’s daughter.”

“Then you must live in the school-house over here, under the dark pines ?”

She looked at me with laughing eyes :

“Live in the school, sir ? Oh no. Is that the fashion in England ? Here not ; our cabin is half way between here and the school, over there on the heath.”

“Can you tell me the nearest way to the Devil’s Pass ?”

“Are you going there, sir ? Oh, it is not far from our cabin. You had better come with me, and father will gladly show you the way.”

“Before we start, will you try a drop of my whisky ?”

“Oh yes, willingly, if you’ll give me your bottle,” she said, and took a very decent pull for her years. Then we started, she on the donkey, I by her side. And so we went over the sunny heath ; no one met us. When we were not speaking or laughing, we heard the lark singing high above our heads in the sunshine.

“How do you call those mountains ?” I presently asked

the girl, as I pointed to the sharp hill-tops, which constantly emerged sharper and more purple from the blue mid-day atmosphere.

"The English call them the Sugar-loaves," was the answer, "but we call them the Gilt Spears, because they always shine and glisten in the sun, long after it has sunk below the heath, and all is in darkness, the valleys, then the meadows, the cabins, and ourselves. Oh, there they flash again, and it is wonderful to look at!"

Then all became silent again, and we continued our journey. The road sank, then rose again steeply, and when we reached the plateau at last, we saw a rough mass of masonry in the middle of the heath, lying rather sadly in the sunlit solitude.

"There's where we live," the girl said. She pointed with her hand, and, as she let it sink, tapped the head of the old donkey, who cocked his ears and wagged his tail at the pleasant touch. "Yes, yes, Grizzle, we shall soon be there; then Isabella will get off and take down the heavy baskets, and you can have a roll in the ditch. Go along, Grizzle!"

The long wall, which resembled a deserted and ruined village, was reached. The shape of the cabins was still recognisable, but that made the scene all the more ghastly. A deserted village in the glowing sunshine, high on the mountains, and in the distance the gentle humming of the bees, and the thousand confused voices of mid-day heat, but not a human being to be seen or heard; the heaps of stone lay there, ruins with the traces of windows, of doors, of the very fire-places still black from the last ashes. Tall grass grew on the ground, and all was nearly falling in. At the end of the decayed village were

two low wretched cabins, built of clay, with the blue smoke lazily rising in the air.

"Where are we, my girl?" I asked.

"Before Ned Macleod, the schoolmaster's cabin: we live there."

"And these stone walls?"

"Oh, fourteen families lived there, hardly four years ago; but Mr. Swing, the landlord, turned them out, because they did not pay their rent."

"And where are they now?"

"About the country," the girl answered, quite harmlessly.

By this time we had reached the two inhabited cabins. Isabella got off the donkey and drew him over the dung-midden after her to the entrance. She opened the door, which, only leant to, was rotting away on its hinges. A pernicious gust almost took my breath away. An active woman was standing before the fire which burnt badly in the unwholesome air, and an old man lay full length on a bench, with his head on a truss of hay.

"A fine day this, the Virgin be praised!" Isabella said, as she walked in. The donkey walked in too. "Grandfather, mother, here is a strange gentleman. Where's father? he must lead the stranger down to the Devil's Glen."

"Walk in," the mother said, who had left the fire, and gave the donkey, whose snout had unconsciously approached the hay, a tremendous box of the ear; "cead mille feailte!—come in, sir, pray."

I thanked the good woman, but told her I was in a great hurry.

"The father's not here, and will not return before

evening," the old man said, as he rose from the truss of hay (by which opportunity the donkey's snout again approached the hay, only to be withdrawn with the same result), "but if you don't mind, I will guide you as well as my old bones will allow."

I gladly accepted the offer; but the old man must first eat his dinner, which was prepared.

"Yes," the mother said, "sit down and take a part of our meal. When three are cooked for, there's enough for four; we have potatoes and mutton fat with thyme, and oaten bread, too, and a little whisky; so come!"

What a barbarian I must have appeared in the eyes of the kind, hospitable woman, to despise mutton fat and thyme. She looked at me in wonder when I said I would sooner wait outside till the old man had finished, and then start at once. The donkey, the hay, the peat-fire, the smell of mutton fat, and various other odours, by a heat of eighty-six degrees in the shade, were too much for me, and while the three settled down to dinner comfortably, and the donkey gave me a quiet look as much as to say he intended still to obtain the object of his desire, I sat down on a hearthstone, and reflected deeply on what I had seen.

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At length the old man came out of the cabin, and approached the stone on which I was seated. He wore a brown shabby frieze coat, in no way suited to the heat brooding over the heath, and a pair of linen trousers in no way suited to the coat; there were certainly air holes in both, and a grey felt hat overshadowed his scanty white locks and furrowed face.

"Here I am, sir," he said, "and I will guide you if

you have no objection. My son would have been a better and more entertaining guide, but he will not return before night."

"Your son is schoolmaster?" I asked, as I rose and walked by the old man's side past the ruins to reach the road again.

"Schoolmaster!" he answered, and stopped to draw breath for his important answer. "Yes, I should think so, and one of the new-fashioned ones, too."

"Are there any old-fashioned ones left?" was my query.

"Well, yes, very old-fashioned, though the most have died off. The few still living are old, seventy years or more, and all are not so well off as I, St. Patrick be thanked."

"You are one of them, then?"

"Yes, sir; and I lived through a great deal of what our children can form no idea. I lived in the time of the penal codes, and bad times they were—God guard Ireland! The poor Catholic was badly off then. You can hardly believe what I tell you. He was excluded from everything in which men take part: parliament and elections, service by land and sea, holding land and office. . Yes, he was not even allowed to carry on every trade, and heavy taxes weighed on him from which the Englishman was free. No Catholic was allowed to keep school publicly; he dared not even teach in a house. We were forced to send our children to the charter schools, where English teachers and clergy tried to make them renounce the faith of their fathers. Our poor children were to learn the English language and Protestant religion; and there were plenty of landlords who wanted to force their tenantry to send their children

to the charter schools. But they would not do it; and where they were turned out, they found a shelter among milder gentlemen, or died in the bogs, to the honour of the Holy Virgin. But we schoolmasters were obliged to collect our children round us privily in the cabins, in order to impart to them the fundamental ideas of our holy religion and the commandments of our holy Church; and, as the cabins were too confined, whenever the weather at all permitted it, we taught in the open air, under the hedges. There we sat in retired spots, that no constable might detect us, and when one was visible in the distance we ran off, master and scholars, as fast as we could. The Holy Virgin be thanked! the times of the hedge schoolmasters have passed away, and for the last thirty years everything has assumed a new shape. And how happy am I that in my son I can live to enjoy the blessings of better times. He was taught at Dublin, in the Model School, and I can tell you he is a very learned man, who can not only read, and write, and count, but he can give you the names of the kings of England as if he had known them all, and tell you the most wonderful stories about towns, and rivers, and mountains, thousands of miles away. But he is well paid, too, for his learning; he has forty pounds a year, the land round our cabin, and some peat ground. So we all live very happily, and when I speak about hedge schools, Isabella looks at me and laughs, though her mother sat in her time under the hedge. The new school is built over there under the dark trees, and it is a fine, handsome building, full of fresh air—a real palace, and a pleasure to be in it.”

“And in what language does your son teach his scholars—is it in Irish?”

“Oh no,” the old man said, sadly; “that is quite forbidden. The children must learn to read and write English. But the Holy Father in Rome has said that we can pray to God and the saints in English: and so it must be true. There are only a few very old folks left who can talk Irish. The language of our fathers has died out here; all our children know of it is a word or a salutation.”

In such conversation we had reached the black trees in whose shade the school stood. It was locked, but the windows were half open, so that I could survey the clean benches, the walls with tables of “All the Kings of England,” and maps of the “towns, rivers, and mountains, thousands of miles off.” Not far hence stood another unpretending building, hitherto concealed by the trees, with whitewashed walls, lofty windows, and a wooden cross at the end of the roof, which glowed in the broken sunbeams.

“That is the chapel,” the old man said, “in which good Father Dominick—the Holy Virgin bless him!—reads mass every Sunday morning.”

The few trees stood like an oasis on the sunburnt steppe, and beneath the trees the two empty buildings, with the white walls, in which God lives.

Our road ran through large solitary meadows. The man with the gun had risen, and was driving his herd down the hill-side. His dog stopped on seeing us pass, put up his ears, and barked. There was no other sound. At the entrance of the forest-clad ravine, which was soon to receive us, we halted and looked down into the green wilderness beneath us.

I lay down in the waving grass. A wild overgrown path led downwards, the trees nodded beneath me, on

the hill above me the rugged birches rustled. The pine bowed its gloomy head, the oak shook its powerful branches, and between them the arbutus merrily waved its frondage up and down. All at once, as if by a marvel, I was removed from the sun glare; there was no longer a colourless steppe; there were no ruined cabins, no wretchedness left; beneath, the steady dark-blue depths; above, the light clouds, the sunshine, the forest rustling; and over there on the hills yellow fields, and, far beyond them again, mountains glistening in the sun. Oh, Isle of the Saints! oh, land of marvels!

The old man invited me to push on. He walked in front, for he knew the road; he had walked on it since his youth—now nearly seventy-eight years. He will not walk it much longer. He separates the entwined bushes, he is not angry when a branch strikes him on the face. He spares the foliage, he is unwilling to break it off. A leaf that remained in his hand he places in his mouth. Fallen trees, round which the luxuriant ivy still wound and held, crossed our path. Good old man of the Irish heath, plants will soon twine round you and hold you too!

So soon as we had cautiously descended from stone to stone, we entered the damp ravine. From every rock pours water—it rustles, drips, and runs all around, and in the centre dances the silver, bright, icy-cold stream over glistening rocks, thickset moss, and waving creepers. Tall green hills bathed in sunshine confine its beshadowed bed. Where the ravine is compressed by enormous blocks of granite I climbed up a rock near the waterfall, and let the spray moisten my parched brow.

Below us, little black-eyed maids, with naked feet and blue petticoats, were dancing from stone to stone, like the fairies of the glen. How pleasant these dainty little

creatures looked, for they seemed to impart new life to nature. The blue garments fluttered, the white legs glistened, and where they touched the water with their feet to try it, it poured up on either side as if checked by so graceful an opposition. My old friend had become very silent ever since we entered the glen; and it was not till he saw the children that he shouted down to them:

“What are you doing there?”

“We are bathing, Father Macleod,” they answered up.

Then they leaped further; Father Macleod gazed at them in silence, and all was still as before—only the rustling of the water, the moaning of the trees over me, of the shrubs and bushes around me. All I saw, heard, and felt, produced the most refreshing midsummer afternoon’s impression upon me. Something glimmered like the autumn sun, like fading leaves, and the evening sun sported round the silver hair of the resting old man. Whither have those garments fluttered? Evening is approaching, and you are resting by the sparkling source, and cannot leave it. Flow on, flow on! Thou wilt refresh many a wanderer when the old man is no longer here, when I am no longer here, when the little angels in the blue clothing have long before learned what loving and sorrowing mean. Flow on, flow on!

“But why do you call this charming glen the Devil’s Glen?” I asked.

“It is not always as you now see it in the soft sunshine of a late summer afternoon,” the old man, who had now risen, answered. “At times, after heavy rains, especially in dark spring nights, this stream swells and rises above the high rocks, and the storm comes and shakes the branches, and uproots the trees, and lays them across

the road. Then it is wild and terrible here; we hear the noise far off, the fall of the water, the roaring of the storm, and strange groans, mingled with shrill laughter and cries of help; and if you gave me a bushel of guineas on Bealtaine night, that is the first night of May, I would not come down here, for the devil plays his games on that night, and woe betide the Christian that crosses his path! Nor would I venture down on All Saints' night."

Then we climbed up a very steep and lofty wall of rock with a thin layer of earth upon it. At every step a boulder loosened under our feet, and rolled down with a splash into the water below; and many a bush by which we held on threatened to give way. At length we reached the top; the glen was again completely covered in by its green trees, it had disappeared like a fairy vision, rock and water and gloom, and we stood once more on the solitary sunburnt heath. As we approached the road, we heard the soft sound of a bell from the chapel: it was Saturday afternoon.

"That is my son," the old man said; "he is ringing the vesper bell." He took off his hat and prayed. Not far off stood the herd on a mound, with his uncovered head resting on his gun. Far in the distance, on the ruins of the deserted village, stood a female form; near her, with its front legs on the stones, stood a donkey. She had her hands folded, and looked down for a while, then she raised her head, covered her eyes from the blinding sun with her hand, and looked out. It was Isabella. The old man gave me his hand in parting and wished me a pleasant journey. In my heart I wished him the same, for I could not dismiss the thought that he would soon have to say farewell to these firs, this chapel,

and this heath. I went off, and the vesper bell escorted me across the sunny plain.

I was a long time alone, not a soul met me ; there was not a cart, not a village, either far or near. At length a solitary cabin made its appearance. It looked comfortable, at least after all the others I had seen that day. I walked in ; there was no one there but a young woman, standing with her back towards me, and she was no little confused when I stepped in, but as she was merry and pretty, we were soon all right together. She gave me milk, and told me, as I drank, that she had only been married a year. It was rather dark in the hut ; a fire burned in the background, and over it hung a saucepan with boiling potatoes.

"My husband will soon come home from work and will be hungry."—Dear, attentive wife !—"He is a mason, and is industrious, and the best husband in Ireland. This house does not belong to us, we have only hired it. Mr. Swing is our landlord."

"Mr. Swing ! Does his land extend so far as this ? Well, wait awhile and he will evict you."

"Oh no !" she answered. "Mr. Swing is a good gentleman. I have heard say you can live under him for ever, if you are only industrious, till the ground, and pay the rent."

The mason and his wife seemed to be comfortable ; all was clean, and though there was but one chair and a bench, the interior of the cabin did not produce a poverty-stricken effect like all those I had hitherto seen. The bed, seen through one of the half-opened doors, even looked stately. In my zeal to study everything strange that offered itself in a strange land, I was on the point of innocently entering the room.

“Not across this threshold!” the young woman said, as she rushed passionately towards me. Her face resembled in hue that of the blazing fire.

See how the Irish wife stands before her sanctuary. Yes, the last relic is saved, the English foe has never been able to destroy it. Thrones and altars are overthrown; the sanctuary where love dwells modestly and purely remains. And wherever their destiny may impel the fugitive Irish, whether to the gloomy backwoods across the Atlantic, or the filthiest holes of London, wherever he stops, he puts up this sanctuary. I laid a coin on the bench for the milk, and proposed to take leave.

“Take your money up, stranger,” the woman said; “whoever seeks bread and milk in our cabin is welcome to it, but we do not sell our friendship.”

I picked up the coin, as if I had committed a sin in offering it to her.

“But cannot I offer you anything, my dear little woman?”

“You have a flask there, is there whisky in it?”

“Yes, and the best, too. Only taste it.”

The merry, pretty woman, just a year married, took the flask and tasted till there was nothing left to taste. Then she returned me the flask, offered me her hand, and wished me a pleasant journey.

On the opposite hill was another cabin, built into the side of the mountain, and I fancied it looked like a shop. At the door stood an Irish beauty, of brilliant form—a girl, in a black, tightly fitting bodice, with long black hair and sparkling eyes. As I approached she disappeared. As I entered the shop her mother made her appearance. There was not much to buy, blacking, tea, bread, lucifers. Where was the girl in the black

bodice? Ha, ha, ha! I heard all at once at my side. She had hidden herself behind two sacks of meal and was peeping coquettishly out.

“It is the fashion in our country,” I cried, “to kiss every pretty girl you meet on your travels.”

“And here, too,” the beauty giggled; “but you must first catch the girl.” She swung herself gracefully round the meal-bag, and I had trouble enough in catching her. Her mother stood by, with her arms stemmed in her sides, and laughed merrily at our innocent sport. With a box of lucifers, about the size of a moderate walking-stick, I left the shop and went down into the valley, often looking back at the black-eyed maid, who was long visible on the hill-side.

The twilight set in, a long and lovely twilight. From this spot the landscape appeared to me more exquisite and rich. The mountains, here bathed in the evening red, there already sucking in the shadow, draw closer together on either side, and in the valley between them runs the Annamoe river, and green meadows clothe its banks. Where the valley widens, stands the Protestant parsonage. What a bright, soft summer evening’s peace around! white pigeons, red-tinged by the departing sunbeams, flutter round the verdure-clad roof; at times a dog barks, but not roughly and inhospitably—perhaps the pastor’s bright-haired daughter is standing before it; it leaps up, and she, afraid lest its clumsy paw may soil her blue dress, keeps it at bay, while it licks her small dainty hand. Where the window glows in the evening gold—the whole window seems converted into gold—there sits the clergyman, perhaps over Luther’s Bible: evening red and Luther’s Bible—is there any thing more glorious in the world? The opposite hill is already quite dark.

From the black bare background two white naked buildings stand out. One is the chapel, the other the dwelling of the Catholic priest. Poor man, how lonely you sit up there! no evening red, no pigeons, no little daughter—the only female creature in your solitary room is the picture of the Mater Dolorosa, which hangs over your table, and perchance reproduces the features of a being you formerly loved, when you were a child and dared to love!

Here a broad bridge leads over the Annamoe, and the village cabins stand scattered about. At the further end is the inn; I heard many voices inside, coarse laughter, and the tinkling of glasses. As I wished to have my flask filled, I walked in; but I scarce opened the door, ere a stifling vapour met me. The room was small, and full of bearded men, smoking the worst possible tobacco. They had just returned from receiving their Saturday wages; most of them seemed to be masons. I grant that I only noticed all this gradually, for all floated hazily before me at first in the impenetrable vapour, but no place was left in which I could sit down; I even noticed that the men put their feet on empty chairs so that the stranger should not sit there. Hence I stood quite confused and helpless.

“We won’t have any Englishman among us. This is an Irish house: no Englishman wants anything here!” Thus the bearded men muttered.

“Is that Irish hospitality?” I asked, on finding myself thus treated.

“No hospitality to Englishmen: they don’t deserve it,” they muttered again.

“Well; give me room to reach the bar. Landlord, fill my flask with whisky.”

The host did not move a hand; the men did not stir; and yet among the men possibly was the one whose pretty little wife had emptied my flask scarce an hour previously. I held my tongue, and walked out.

The sun had now completely set, and the eastern hills behind me stood there with gloriously illumined crests, while the cool thin twilight began to fill the mountain glens before me; but all remained silent and solitary: there was no sound of bells saluting the coming Sunday, no singing, no shouts of joy. The river at length grew wider, patches of wood might be seen here and there, and uprooted trees lay on the bank and seemed to be rotting away. Next came Laragh; black-haired girls, with naked feet, and men in torn coats walked up to the door, gazed at me, and laughed when I had passed. A few pleasant houses glimmer through the twilight over the distant meadows. There lives the gentleman (the landlord), there the doctor, on that hill is the Protestant church, on the other, the chapel. The mountain opens out, and enclosed in it lies the valley of Glendalough, the valley of myths, fables, and miracles of pious monks and the grey primæval monastic times. Night covers it, but the windows of the inn that receives the tired wayfarer glistened cheerily and bright. "Welcome to Glendalough!" the host says, and shakes my hand. "Welcome to Glendalough, to the glen of the two lakes!"

CHAPTER IV.

GLENDALOUGH — NEW ACQUAINTANCES — TALKING GERMAN — MILES DOYLE — THE ENGLISH WAITER — THE UPPER LAKE — THE "PICTURESQUE TOURIST" — THE HORSE STEALER — ST. KEVIN'S BED — THE SEVEN CHURCHES — A FAIRY CUP — FINN-MAC-CUL — THE CATHEDRAL — PRAY FOR DIARMAIT — THE ROUND TOWER — THE IVY CHURCH.

THE lamplight, the comfort of the little inn, did me good; even more, though, the sight of an old gentleman in a stiff white cravat, and gold glasses, and two young ladies, who bowed politely to me. The old gentleman sat with all the solemn dignity of a president at the upper end of the table. He had a large map of Ireland lying before him, on which he was drawing lines with a red pencil. At the same time he smoked a cigar, which went out every few minutes, and which he lighted again with a spill, which he threw still alight on the floor, to the evident disgust of the waiter. The young ladies sat on either side of him; they were both pretty, both brown-eyed, brown-haired, and roguish, and dressed in high-necked blue gowns; both eighteen or so; in short, the prettiest twins I had ever seen in my life, and I could not think it possible to fall in love with one without simultaneously loving the other.

They were leaning over the table; one was fixing flowers in a sort of album; the other was writing a

letter ; but every minute they looked up and exchanged a smile. They took the greatest trouble to be serious, but they could not manage it. The old gentleman seemed considerably bothered ; he had been seeking a name on the map for the last quarter of an hour, and when the girls laughed the last time, he told them that every time they giggled, he lost his way. They must keep quiet ; that was much more proper for girls like them. They bit their lips and tried to be serious ; but it was cruel to forbid such pretty girls a laugh.

At length, the old gentleman rubbed his hands, and found time to address me.

“ Glad to meet you, sir,” he said, as he drew a broad red line over the map ; “ here is the name, so now we can drink. Waiter, four noggins of punch.”

“ Very well, sir,” the waiter replied, who, while clearing the table, had removed the spills.

“ But hot, waiter, very hot. And where are the spills, waiter ?”

The waiter said he could not find them ; whereon Mr. Macrie (that was the old gentleman’s name, I afterwards learned) declared he would tear up *Saunders’s News Letter* ; so the waiter produced the spills from a dark corner and put them on the table with such a bang that the lamps trembled.

“ Take care you don’t upset the lamp, waiter,” said Mr. Macrie.

“ Thank you, sir, but I will take care.”

Then came the hot water, and the whisky was poured into the glasses. Mr. Macrie declared that strong punch was not suited for young girls, so he gave each of them a spoonful of whisky, and stuck to the rest, and so he became very jolly.

After Mr. Macrie had stirred up the punch and lit his cigar again, he told me he was a linen merchant from Belfast, and Irish antiquarian; that he made a journey through Ireland every year at this time, in order to study any objects of antiquarian interest, collect outstanding accounts from any customers in the vicinity, and, when possible, open fresh ones. On this journey he had brought his daughters, in order to arouse their feeling for antiquities. At this word the pretty girls tittered, and mirrored their faces in the weak whisky punch.

After a pause, Mr. Macrie asked were I a linen merchant too. After expressing my regret that I was not, I explained I was a German, to which Mr. Macrie responded, "Only think!" Then he asked his daughters whether they had ever seen a German? and Jane said, "Yes, she had. In London, a little ugly, dirty man, with old coats and hats on his arm, passed her uncle's house every morning, yelling 'Illow, illow, illow!'"

Before I had time to protest against my adopted brother, Mr. Macrie had requested his daughter Ellen to remember that the Germans were a people—here was a pause, as the cigar had gone out—a people living in the vicinity of the German Ocean. "They speak several languages, of which Prussian is the widest spread. They are very learned, and can all sing well."

"Oh, let us have a song!" said Ellen, as she threw her pen down. Ellen, namely, was selected by her father to keep the scientific journal.

"Yes, a song!" Jane joined in.

I had some difficulty in making the girls understand that I could not sing; Mr. Macrie had too good an opinion of the German voices, and hence did me great injustice.

“ They are very learned and can all sing well,” Mr. Macrie repeated, imperturbably.

“ Well, then, talk a little Prussian ; I am so fond of hearing foreign languages,” said Ellen. Nothing could be said against this ; so I spoke a little Prussian, and the girls almost killed themselves with laughter. “ It was the strangest language in the world, and very difficult to understand.”

In the mean while, we had emptied our glasses, and Mr. Macrie wanted me to join his breakfast party next morning, and inspect the ruins together.

The next morning I was up early, and walked up to the seven churches. On one of the graves lay a man stretched out in the morning sun, whom I had not at first noticed, though the blue smoke from his little pipe rose cheerily in the air. He rose as I approached him.

“ Fine day, this Sunday, the Lord be thanked,” he said.

“ Be thanked,” I repeated.

“ Is your honour from Dublin ?” he asked.

“ No honour,” I said, “ and not from Dublin ; a modest tourist from distant lands.”

“ Then you do not know me,” he said, rather sadly, and as it seemed, more to himself than to me. “ You don’t know Miles Doyle ; if you were from Dublin, you would know me. Have you ever heard of Dr. Wilde and Dr. Graves ? Oh, all the Irish scholars know me ; I found the old gravestones about here for them, and scratched away the earth that they might read the oghams. Show me that green book you have in your hand ; oh, I see, it is Black’s Picturesque Tour in Ireland. Mr. Black knows me well ; I told him all he wrote about

Glendalough. Now, tell me, how far away is your home?"

"A thousand miles."

"A thousand miles! By St. Patrick, that is a distance! You are welcome, sir, to Glendalough. Miles Doyle will be your guide."

"Good," I said; "but just go back with me to the inn; let me have my breakfast, and then we will start."

We went back to the inn. My new friend was a splendid fellow, and I must say so now. His brown face was rendered still darker by his black hair and whiskers, and in his greyish-blue eyes there was with all the cunning a good share of honesty. He wore a red striped shirt, half open on the chest, a broad, very coarse straw hat, and a frieze coat that had probably seen better days, for it was old, very old; there were no buttons, but plenty of button-holes and other holes besides.

"'Tis my Sunday coat, sir," he said, as he understood my glance. "We Irish are a poor lot, and must wear the coats the English throw away. God bless us!"

Across his upper lip he had a tremendous scar.

"Whence the scar, Miles?" I asked.

"A horse kicked me. Plenty of scars, too, all over my body. God be thanked that the whole world need not see them! Here in my arm a shot wound, another in my back. Shot and knocked about, but his head still high, such is old Miles Doyle."

"Were you in action?"

"The Lord forbid!" said Miles, seemingly quite horrified at the thought. "I got them poaching. I am summonsed for next week. And I won't give it up till they have killed me. And Lord knows they do hunt

me. They will shoot me, too. Then all will be over, but not sooner, I tell you."

"But it is madness to rush on ruin in that way, Miles."

"It is madness, but it's better than starving. Miles Doyle must eat meat now and then, and his wife and child can't live on fasting. I am taken care of so long as I have my life and my gun. God guard them when I am gone."

"Do you live here in the valley?"

"No; three miles further, on Anamoe hill."

"Annamoe!" I exclaimed. "Are you the mason with the young wife?"

"That is my neighbour, sir. My cabin is opposite."

"A shop—the stout woman—the pretty black-eyed girl?"

"That is my wife, and my daughter, and my shop," Miles said; "but how do you know that, young sir?"

"I was there yesterday, and bought matches."

"That was yourself, sir? Welcome, welcome! My wife and daughter talked about you the whole evening. That was yourself," he said, as he squeezed my hands, and looked in my face with an expression of the utmost good-will. "Och, och, och!" he then continued, "why did I not know it? then I could have brought Minnie down with me."

"Send a messenger up and tell her to come. Do so, good Miles, at once."

He stood in thought. "It is too late," he slowly answered, "she has already started for Woodenbridge. There is a pattern there to-day—there'll be dancing, and singing, and rare fun for Irish folk. I couldn't refuse the child. She has gone there with her mother. Och,

och, och! that she is not here. A splendid girl, my Minnie! Did you notice the black velvet jacket she wears? A week ago, just, she was down here with me. We had a grand party of ladies and gentlemen to guide. My girl Minnie was always ahead, first above and then below; and the gentry couldn't see enough of her. Poor creature! the gown she wore was bad enough; and over her bosom was an old shawl her mother wore long before there was a thought of Minnie. One of the gentry said, 'How well that child would look if decently dressed:' said and done. When we got back to the hotel one of the ladies called my girl into her room: 'Here, my child,' she said, 'is a velvet jacket; always wear it when you wish to look pretty, and when you wear it think of me.' Then she kissed my darling on the forehead, and I received two bright half-crowns in the bargain. Oh, if Minnie was here!"

"How far is it to Wooden-bridge?"

"Three hours' drive, sir."

"And how long will your wife and Minnie be there?"

"Till the moon rises."

"Good!" I said; "I shall see them once again. I am going this afternoon to Wooden-bridge."

"God bless you for it, young sir!" Miles exclaimed, with visible delight; "God bless you! How glad Minnie, my child, will be. And I tell you, you mustn't let her go this time unkissed; and when you do it, think father and mother are kissing you too, for you are so kind."

When I walked into the coffee-room with Miles Doyle, Mr. Macrie, white and stiff about the neck, was already seated at the breakfast-table. The girls looked more charming than ever; they wore grey dresses, and each had a rose in her bosom. They seemed like the

genii of Spring, and I could have fancied them floating arm-in-arm in the blue clear heaven, smiling gracefully down on us. Mr. Macrie did not look like the father of two fairies, at least not at this moment. He was annoyed because I had kept him waiting so long; he was hungry, too, and the waiter had also plainly conspired against me, and, nobly forgetting the spills of the previous evening, had made common cause with Mr. Macrie. I was greeted on his side with considerable doubt, and the good feeling did not increase when my worthy Miles Doyle appeared behind me and I presented him to the company as the guide for our day's jaunt.

"Vagabond," the waiter said, "and a poacher in the bargain!"

"Guide?" Mr. Macrie asked—"why a guide? What these people know may be found in Black's Picturesque Tourist."

"Because these people told it," Miles modestly remarked.

"In Mr. and Mrs. Hall's Illustrated Ireland——"

"Who copied what these people told them," Miles muttered.

"Rogue!" the waiter said.

"In short, what these people know I know too," Mr. Macrie shouted, evidently jealous of poor Miles, and surveying him from head to foot.

"And a poacher in the bargain!" the waiter added, with his bitterest whisper.

But Miles had heard him.

"Wait awhile, you English blackguard!" he muttered to himself. There he stopped, but I afterwards learned that the waiter was an Englishman and special foe of Miles; he protected another guide who gave him a per-

centage on his earnings, and hated Miles because he would pay him nothing. Had not the two grey dresses with roses in their bosoms bravely supported me, I should certainly have been left in a minority, but in this way our candidate was passed. Mr. Macrie vented his spite on the ham and eggs, and the English foe, the waiter, had the unheard-of humiliation of bringing another cup and plate in for the vagabond poacher, who cosily enjoyed his breakfast in the chimney corner, with many side glances of contempt.

We then started. Miles Doyle always kept with the two girls and me; Mr. Macrie had enough to do with himself. On one side he carried a telescope in a leathern case, on the other a flask; in the right hand Black's Picturesque Tourist, and in the left the large map of Ireland with the red marks. He paid little attention to us; for he must jot down something every minute on his note-book. We walked under the hill surmounted by the round tower; its shadow fell on us as we passed, a shadow a thousand years old, on the roses in Jane and Ellen's bosom! all seemed melancholy enough, though the bright sun shone over us. To our left we had the first or lower lake; and walked in a thinly-grown field of oats, more stones than haulms, if I could have counted fairly. The first miracle of St. Kevin, the patron saint, to whom nearly everything shown us in this gloomy vale related, was told us here. An old stone cross, whose corners were gnawed and broken by storm and rain, stood in the field, sparsely surrounded by oats. Miles called our attention to four large holes on one side, and four smaller holes on the other side of the cross. Then he said:

"Your honours, look you, this cross was raised in memory of Garadh Duff, the horse-thief, whom St. Kevin killed

here, because he told him a falsehood. About thirteen hundred years back, this Garadh came riding along the lake on a handsome black mare, leading its colt by the hand. St. Kevin, Heaven bless him! meets him in the field of oats, and says :

“‘How did you come by that fine animal, Garadh?’

“‘Oh,’ said Garadh, ‘I bought it over there.’

“‘You thief of the world,’ St. Kevin cried, ‘that is a lie.’

“‘Oh,’ said Garadh, ‘by the slipper of our holy father in Rome, what I told you is true!’

“‘You are a perjurer and a thief,’ said St. Kevin, ‘and I’ll make an example of you to the world’s end. You must die and go down to purgatory!’ And, after exchanging a few words, he killed him on this very spot, and put up the cross in memory of him, with the hoof marks of the mare on this side, and the colt’s on the other. But the saint did not bury the perjurer here, but in his own parish at the round tower. I will show it to you presently.”

“You tell falsehoods yourself,” Mr. Macrie shouted, after looking long and cautiously through his Picturesque Tourist; “Black doesn’t say a word of it.”

“Look you, your honour,” the guide replied; “poor Miles knows many things which Mr. Black doesn’t tell.”

“If I could trust to it being true,” the critical linen dealer remarked.

“As true as I hope for salvation, your honour,” Miles said.

“Then you can make a note of it, my daughters. Ellen, don’t forget to put that in the diary this evening.”

We walked on and reached the shore of the upper

ake. We sat down on a boat turned on its side, and Miles Doyle stretched himself flat on the grassy soil. Around us a strange group collected: Irish boys, with ruddy long narrow faces, bright blue eyes, naked feet, in rags, with their shirts hanging out, and their light hair hanging over their foreheads from under their crushed-in hats; Irish girls, with irregular, handsome features, black eyes full of southern passion, in a dress which with its countless rags was more picturesque than correct: there was not a whole pair of shoes or stockings among the party. Under a bush sat an elderly woman in a yellowish gown, with coal-black eyes, and ragged hair round her bronzed face. I fancied myself among gipsies. All was wondrously quiet around and over us. The lake did not move, not a breath of wind stirred the scanty vegetation or the oak-leaves. What most surprised me was that the air remained as still as the wood and lake were. Even the lark, which had been my companion on the most desolate heath, was missing here. In vain did I look up into the dark-blue sky; there was only a cloud here and there, but all else lifeless, dead, and silent.

“Yes,” said Miles Doyle, after filling and lighting his pipe, with our permission and our tobacco—“yes, no lark has sung over this valley or this lake for the last thirteen hundred years. I will tell you why.”

The party drew closer together, and even the woman in the yellow gown advanced from the bush to hear a story she had heard many thousand times before; and Miles began:

“The people who built the town which once stood here round the Seven Churches, took a vow to begin work every morning so soon as the lark waked them—

for there were no bells in those days—and not to leave off till the lamb called them to rest. They kept their vow, and at last grew so weak from their labour that many of them died. The good saint then had pity with the labourers, and forbade the larks ever again singing over the lakes of Glendalough. The larks flew away sadly, and for thirteen hundred years not one has been heard to sing here, although not a hundred yards beyond the valley as many larks fly about and carol as anywhere in Ireland.”

“That is true,” said the savant from Belfast; “it is in Black’s Tourist. My daughters, that is true. I have marked it with red.” So good friend Black was not even safe from Mr. Macrie’s pencil.

In the mean while a powerful man had come down the hill-side in his broad-brimmed hat and Sunday coat.

“Gilly, my boy, make haste!” Miles shouted to him; “we have been waiting a long time for you.”

Gilly, the boatman, thrust a skiff into the water, and we got in; the girls first, then I, then Miles, and Mr. Macrie came last of all, after carefully inquiring how deep the lake was, and whether any accident had happened upon it.

“Accident, yes, but it is thirteen hundred years since it happened. Gilly, pull ahead, I will tell the story in the mean while.”

As we glided over the blackish-green, deathly-silent water, we looked at the Irish boys and girls, running, crawling, and leaping along the shore. The whole party had started as our escort. With their gay clothes showing through the green branches, the band of sprites flew past over our heads, and Miles began:

“When St. Kevin was still a young man, about

twenty years or so, a young girl of about seventeen, of the name of Kathleen, fell so passionately in love with him that she could not live without seeing him. She requested nought of him but to be permitted to see his shadow; she would not even hear his voice, but only its echo; she promised to be always at his feet and do penance for his sins and her own, but the saint repelled her, and, to escape all temptation, fled from her. But however secret and hidden his lurking-place might be, Kathleen found it out, and implored the saint not to repulse her. At last he came to this valley, where no human being had ever lived before him. High on Rock Lugduff, which you can see hanging bare and steep over the sea, beyond the oak wood, he found a cave, in which he hid himself. But even here the loving woman pursued him, although the path could only be followed at the risk of life; and when he awoke in the morning on his hard bed of rocks, the blue eyes of the unhappy Kathleen were fixed sorrowfully on him. Then the saint arose, and with one push hurled the loving maiden from the rock into the lake, and here, your honours, is the spot where Kathleen died."

We stopped at the foot of the Lugduff. The bare grey rock rises some thousand feet above the lake; and a black quadrangular hole was pointed out to us about thirty feet above the water. "St. Kevin's bed," said Miles; "there the saint hid himself, and pushed Kathleen from that slab." At this moment, the old brown woman in the yellow gown appeared in the mouth of the cave, and the children grouped round her on the dangerous precipice. "Look at the woman up there, it is Kathleen!" Miles said.

The woman bent over the rock and grinned down at

us in delight at Doyle's words. So much I saw, that the saint would never have been a sinner with this Kathleen. Gilly tied up the boat, and Miles, as he got out and pointed to the steep path, invited us to follow him.

Hitherto Mr. Macrie had been silent; he had listened to the story half dubiously, half timidly, on account of the water. Now he drew himself up, though, with the look and tone of an insulted lion.

"Impudent fellow!" he shouted, "how can you ask a gentleman to clamber up this path?" Then, slowly recovering from his first excitement, for he evidently trembled at the mere thought, he said, in a minor key: "I fancy the path is slightly dangerous."

Mr. Macrie was correct; it runs almost perpendicularly from projection to projection; one false step, and the adventurer would fall back into the lake and be lost. Where the path begins to grow dizzily steep, stood Kathleen, who stretched out her brown thin hand to me. Miles pushed me behind, and with one desperate leap I sat in St. Kevin's bed. From the water rose shouts of applause; I would not look round, but I knew the merry voices of the girls in the boat. I crept into the black cavity and crouched down. It is about four square feet in size; it is excavated in the hard rock; whether it is the work of human hands or of nature it is difficult to say. The stone walls are rough, but many a tourist has scratched his name upon them. A large W. S., in good preservation, tells the pilgrim that Walter Scott has been here, and that he did not refuse to immortalise the name which many an eternal book bears on the hard rock of Glendalough. Oh, elements of human fame! Which will endure the longer, the books or the rock?

The water was motionless, and through the opening of

the cave I could see the green hill and the rocks opposite. That was all. At times, the yellow-gowned woman, with the greyish blue eyes, and black hair laid behind her ears, looked in. She stood on the edge of the precipice—one push, and she would be lost for ever. The thought that this push was in my power to give tortured me fearfully. My hand quivered. I begged the woman, in Heaven's name, to withdraw ; she did so, and I followed her. I followed her trembling, very different from when I climbed up, and I must have looked very pale when I reached the boat again. The girls received me with a shout, but became quite still when they saw me so pale. I, too, was silent, but Mr. Macrie said he had never fancied that Germans were such famous climbers ; and Ellen must make a note of it that evening, he added.

Gilly entered the boat, unshipped his oars, and we were soon out on the lake again. We all sat silent, the plash of the oars sounding monotonously stroke after stroke. Miles was standing up ; after a while, he said St. Kevin could not have been a real Irishman, for such a one would never have thrown a pretty girl out of his bed. Gilly laughed, but Mr. Macrie said that he must not make use of such equivocal remarks in future. It was not at all proper for a guide to make jokes. Then all was still again, save the sound of oars. After a lengthened pause, Miles asked us should he repeat the song Tommy Moore had made about this lake.

“My bonny Tom Moore—the Lord be merciful to his soul!—I knew him when he walked slowly round the lakes, or sat about on rocks in the woods.”

We begged him to repeat the lines, and he began to the time of the oars.

We pulled to the oak wood, and walked up the hill by a convenient path under shady trees. The vegetation

was very luxuriant by the side of the hill. Tall ferns and heavily frondaged oaks rustled around us, the whole magic of a sunlit forest solitude surrounded us. Thus we reached the hermitage of St. Kevin on a wooded promontory over the lake; a few remains of an old round wall, densely overgrown with mosses and creepers, stand at this spot; the entrance is still visible through a step in a circular cutting in the grass. Through a clearing in the trees I could look around me: at the upper lake on the left, a patch of meadow and the lower lake, the churchyard, the round tower, the ruins, and the rocks forming the background. All lay down on the grass. I seated myself on the roots of an oak-tree that grew in the wall; before me stood an aged stone cross, its angles worn and decayed by time and weather, and half-buried in the ground.

I sat there thinking, and had lost myself in the distant regions of thought, and it was Jane's merry voice which recalled me to myself, as she asked me, sportingly, what I had been thinking about so long. She did not believe me when I told her stone crosses; she shook her head, and considered there were pleasanter things a person might think of when sitting under a tree in the forest. Mr. Macrie, too, had grown lively, and was engaged in an antiquarian dispute with Miles Doyle. He opposed nearly every remark of the guide, and declared there was not a word of truth in it. Then he looked in his *Picturesque Tourist*, and was silent when he found Doyle's remarks in it. When he did not find them, he made an enormous disturbance; besides, it was not proper for a guide to talk so much, and smoke so much: that was not only against respect, but disturbed a stranger in his meditations. Poor Miles! Make no jokes, not smoke,

nor talk! He was in a bad humour, and when I returned he whispered to me his surprise that Mr. Macrie, with his many thoughts and so much respect, should have a couple of such pretty daughters.

We then quitted St. Kevin's cell, and reached, a little lower down the hill, Righ Fearth, the king's grave, in a pine wilderness. Only the western wall, with the door of the church that formerly stood here, still remains. A tree has grown out of the wall over the entrance, which bows a welcome to the visitor; many stone crosses, in a semi-state of preservation, lie on the ground; others still stand inside. Within all is ruin; stones lie atop of one another, between them the semicircular arches of the window, grey, and so covered with moss that the stone can scarce be recognised. Stone rings, with twisted serpents, symbols of the Christian faith, symbols of eternity, are buried in dust; while trees have grown out of the opening in which the cross once stood. Over the ruins of the church, and the graves of the saints, Nature preaches her everlasting gospel. Nature is the first thing; we pray, we hope, we believe that she is not the last; but we do not know.

Behind the church, in the deepest solitude of the woods, sleep the Mac Tules, the old kings of Wicklow; creeping plants, oak roots, nettles, have grown together so closely over these graves, that hand and foot find difficulty in forcing a way through. Creating Nature has constituted herself a guardian of these graves; neither wantonness nor clannish hatred will ever disturb the rest of the dead kings of Ireland. Their "monument" has disappeared; the guides themselves have broken it up and sold it to strangers. Miles Doyle has not done it, he *could* not have done it. He kills the English landlords'

game, but he does not sell the gravestones of his old kings.

Beyond the graves, in the paradisaic distance full of pleasant soul-inspiring life, the glance wanders over meadows with yellow and red flowers—cups full of celestial dew—with whispering fern, whispering of eternity and resurrection, with golden green shrubs, the green of immortal hope illumined by the sun's gold, and high overhead the clear, silent, deep-souled summer heaven in which Deity resides. At the other end of the meadow we crossed, Miles bent down and plucked a blue campanula, whose edge was fading into red.

“That is a fairy cup; they drank out of it last night, that is why the leaves are red on the edge.”

I gave the flower to Ellen, and she kissed it, and said she would keep the fairy cup in memory of this pleasant day.

Wood and hill again joined the meadow. Immediately on entering the wood a rustling could be heard from the depths below. Our path led down to the hillside, and the waterfall sprinkled a refreshing coolness around. Standing on a moss-covered oak branch, which bends over the foaming water, I hung over it, free in the air as a bird, a lonely man, among the hermits, and saints, and dead kings of Glendalough, with trees rustling around me, and the water plashing beneath me, and by my side sat the fair daughters of the solitude, Myth and her bright-haired daughter, Fable! The Pagan heroes, the Finians, and the Christian saints, rise up. Canonical miracles and fading pictures from the fairy kingdom are interwoven. For the first time Finn-Mac-Cul, the old Irish national hero, the true “Erigena”—for the Fingal

of the Scottish Highlands is only a copy from him—rises in his native home before us.

“Do you see that four-cornered hole in the mountain?” Miles Doyle asked; “we call it the Giant’s Glen, in memory of Finn-Mac-Cul. About thirteen hundred years back, Finn walked one morning about these hills, and met a friend and comrade returning from battle. ‘How went the fight?’ Finn asked. ‘Badly,’ said the other; ‘we were beaten.’ ‘Oh, murder and Irish!’ said Finn; ‘I wish I had been with you. I’ll show you what I should have done!’ So he took his sword and cut a piece out of the hill, and it rolled down into the valley. ‘That’s what I should have done!’ he said.”

Then Miles Doyle showed us the lower lakes, the lake of the monster, Lough-na-Peiste, whose mirror could be clearly seen through the trees. In this lake the last snake kept in concealment after St. Patrick had expelled the snakes and toads for ever. It was a fearful monster, and no one could have a tussle with it for more than two hundred years; at length St. Kevin killed it with his wolf-dog. This story, too, was thirteen hundred years old. Miles would have nothing to do under that date, and it was a matter of perfect indifference to him whether the actors were Pagans or Christians.

“Since that time, however,” he concluded, “there have been no more serpents in Ireland, and if any are imported, they must die on touching Erin’s soil; and the frogs still left dare not croak as they do elsewhere.”

We walked out of the wood along the side of the stream to the lower lake. How sad everything had suddenly become! The cemetery, with its churches and the round tower and the graves and naked stone hills, lay

around us in the dazzling sunshine. Not a shadow save that which the tall tower cast ; no verdure but that which crawled over the ruins. The round tower stood in the enormous silence of the mid-day heat like Pompey's Pillar in the Alexandrian desert ; we were the nomades who had just quitted the oasis.

We stepped over a number of large stones laid in the bed of the stream, and stood under the last archway of the wall of Glendalough. It has fallen together considerably during late years, and who knows how long it will still stand ? A rough but very old stone wall runs from it on either side, and surrounds the cemetery. We stopped at the entrance of Our Lady's Chapel, which is in an excellent state of preservation ; ivy creeps round the architrave, and the sun weaves its golden beams in the garland of death. The walls consist of immense stones laid on one another. The interior is bare, the roof has disappeared. Next to it is another church, that of SS. Peter and Paul. The door on the western wall and the windows are semicircular. The roof is perfect, and at its western extremity is a small round tower with a conical covering, probably the oldest instance of this sort. The little round tower looks at a distance not unlike a chimney, and hence the Irish peasant calls this ruin "St. Kevin's kitchen." Thick moss covers the roof, and many a tender tree has grown out of it. So high does Nature climb to wave her green flag of victory !

We next entered the cathedral, the Domnach-mohr—not the most remarkable building, but the one that most affects the visitor with its ivy-covered ruins. It is completely destroyed, and only the fragments of the wall indicate its former extent. The ground is covered with weeds, among which a few tombstones are visible. One

of these Miles cleansed : the once quadrangular stone had become rounded in the course of centuries ; many cracks had rent it, but the ornaments were still visible, representing a cross with rosetted rings in the centre and the corners. As inscription, it bore the following signs :

Or D.O. DIARMAIT.

Pray for Diarmait ! It was addressed to us too. I know not what the others did, but I saw Miles cross himself, and his lips move slightly, as he read the inscription.

Not a soul had hitherto been visible in the ruins ; no one had met us. The sun, the ivy, and ourselves, were the only living things in this kingdom of the dead. When we came out of the cathedral, we saw a young woman on her knees before a cross near St. Kevin's kitchen. She was not disturbed by our appearance, and we walked very softly past her. Miles, however, seemed of a different opinion, and shouted,

“ Ho ! Betsy, what's the matter ? ”

Betsy looked up ; her face was tear-swollen.

“ Oh ! ” she sobbed, “ my husband is so ill, so ill ! ”

Then she bowed once more over the stone cross.

“ Have you been to the doctor yet ? ” Miles asked.

“ Yes,” the poor woman replied ; “ but the doctor of Laragh has gone into the country, and will not return before night, and it may be morning before he comes up to us in the mountains. Ah ! ” she sobbed through her tears, “ if the Virgin would only help ! ”

And I heard a voice within me say, “ Pray for Diarmid ! ”

Miles crossed himself and whispered a prayer ; we collected a small sum for the poor woman, and gave it to Miles to hand to her.

Then we walked on ; grave after grave, slab on slab. Whoever is buried in this churchyard, will be saved on the day of judgment : St. Kevin obtained salvation for his dead from Heaven. The earth of this cemetery protects against sundry illnesses : any one who takes in his teeth the stone lying under the cross, and runs with it thrice round the cemetery without stopping, will never suffer from toothache again.

At length we stood under the great round tower—the old grey king of this world of ruins—a king without a crown, for the roof has disappeared—a king without subjects, a most solitary, deserted old king. Silently and solemnly he looks down on the small round tower of St. Kevin's kitchen. He is the father, as it were, the other the son—a baby round tower, Ellen called it ; but it is a baby with a grey mossy head, and a long depending beard of creepers. And yet, the French poet says, "The dead never grow old." Ah, the dead of Glendalough are fearfully old ; they look wearied, as if they would be glad to die again. We went into the round tower, and a cold, vault-like blast met us ; the wind, which we had not felt outside, roared in the hollow pillar, and the sound seemed ghostly in the gloom that received us. Mr. Macrie disturbed our reflections ; he had been afraid to come in through fear of catching cold, and now he shouted,

"Why do you leave me here so long ? It is not proper for my daughters to remain so long away from their parent."

The funny old gentleman had apparently grown tired of his antiquarian researches outside, and vented his displeasure on his daughters, for Miles was not at hand. He had gone on, and made signs to us to follow him. He showed us a square hole in the ground overgrown with grass and moss.

“Here Garadh Duff, the horse-thief, lies buried,” Miles said. “When he was about to die, he said, ‘Holy father, grant me one prayer—bury me in your own churchyard, so that I may be saved, and leave a hole in my grave, through which I will thrust my hand when a horse-stealer passes and pinch his leg, that he may think on you, holy father.’”

“Only horse-stealers—not poachers?” Mr. Macrie asked.

“Not poachers, thank the saints!” Miles replied, as he placed his foot on the hole, to render it easy for Garadh to pinch his leg, if he felt any inclination; but the ghostly arm did not appear; and Miles said, once again, “Not poachers, thank the saints!”

The last of the churches still left us to visit is situated on the high road leading from Laragh. It was the Ivy Church, perhaps the best preserved specimen of old Christian buildings in Ireland. The quadrangular entrance, the choir, and the windows, with their semi-circular arches—in short, all the characteristic features of the old style are found here in excellent condition. But, at the same time, the most luxuriant plants have done all in their power to adorn and enliven this glorious relic of a glorious age. Completely hidden in ivy, it resembles a temple in which Nature is performing her religious rites. The thick roots of waving trees have joined above the entrance, and hold the crumbling stones together as with strong arms. What will man in this sanctuary?

Our work was ended, and we could depart; and we did go, till we reached a bog that lay between the wood and the high road. Across it was our world; we saw the cabins of Laragh, we saw human beings again, but

the bog interposed. Mr. Macrie declared that Miles was a treacherous fellow, purposely leading them into danger. Miles observed there were stones enough in the bog, and it was easy to spring from one to the other. But to this Mr. Macrie would not trust, and Miles had at length to carry him over pickaback. The two girls had sprung over by my assistance ; the water had scarce kissed the dust away from their dainty little feet. If stones could feel, they must have been delighted at the grace with which Ellen and Jane stepped upon them. Many a manly heart would have given something to be so trampled upon by such pretty feet.

Mr. Macrie sat on Miles's back like a hero : his right hand was firmly twisted in Miles's hair, with the left he held on to his whisker, and Miles held him in addition with both arms. In this way he trotted through the bog, while Mr. Macrie cried, "Oh, oh, oh !" with closed eyes. When he reached the opposite shore in good preservation, he asserted that he had safely gone through a great danger, and gave his daughters a sacred promise never to venture it again.

"Oh, my daughters," he said, "now we will go to dinner."

CHAPTER V.

GOOD-BY TO GLENDALOUGH—THE CLARA VALLEY—THE HILL OF FINN'S WIVES—RATHDRUM—POTHEEN—THE VALE OF AVOCA—THE MEETING OF THE WATERS—THE MOTTY-STONE—IRISH PATTERNS—WOODEN-BRIDGE—A SONG—NIGHT SCENES—A GAME WITH SHILLELAHS—MINNIE—A PROTECTOR—AN IRISH ROW—PLEASANT DAYS AND HAPPY MEMORIES.

WE hurried back to the inn. The waiter no longer stood in the doorway: many Sunday guests had arrived, and there was plenty of running from the kitchen to the coffee-room, up and down stairs. He had no time to abuse poor Miles and reproach me, or deprive Mr. Macrie of the spills. He had scarce time even to listen to us when we asked about dinner. He said, "Directly, directly!" and we went for a while to our rooms. From my window I surveyed once again all I had visited this day. It was no longer strange to me—I stood and surveyed the green landscape. And, as if it would recognise my authority over it, although silence had reigned in the valley the whole day through, at this moment a bugle began sounding in the misty distance, and, lost in the melody, I, a poor poet, stood there a rich and happy king!

When I presently went to the inn door, Miles Doyle

was sitting on a wooden bench before it. He was smoking his pipe and gazing thoughtfully on the ground. He rose as I approached, and looked at me with remarkable tenderness.

"Remember me to Minnie," he said, "and my old fat wife, too. I do not doubt you will see them at Woodenbridge. I wish I could go with you; but poor Miles must be at his post. Perhaps there will be strangers here this afternoon, and money to earn."

I promised to carry out his wishes.

"Ah, you are so kind, young gentleman," he said. I did not know how far I deserved this praise, and there was a pause. "So kind, young gentleman," Miles said. Then he looked at me with his most cunning glance, and at length blurted out a question which, it seemed, must have long lain on his heart. "Young gentleman," he said, "as you noticed so much of what I said in my stupid way, and made so many remarks in your notebook, of course you intend—pray forgive the question—to write a book about our country in your language, as the gentlemen from Dublin and Mr. Black have done?"

"Perhaps so," I replied. "What next?"

"Well, then, I would beg you, sir, as you are so kind, not to forget poor Miles Doyle, the guide of Glendalough."

Good Miles, I have not forgotten you! You stand at this moment—while a German April shower is dashing against my windows—before me, in the glorious mid-day sun of Glendalough. With your torn coat, your broad straw hat, the scar over your lip, your pipe, your grey clever eyes, and your melancholy honest face; and if one of my valued readers, male or female, should visit Glendalough, be assured, good Miles, they will ask after you and take you as guide, even were the waiter to say

that you were a poacher and a vagabond! Then, he asked if I did not intend to return some day?

"Yes," I said, "some day, when I have married, and take my wife to show all the places where I was happy in thinking of her; then I will visit Glendalough too."

"One of those two?" Miles asked, pointing to the inn.

"No, my good fellow, my wife must be German; but just as pretty, pleasant, and good as they are."

Whereon Miles Doyle took off his straw hat, and shouted, "Long life to your young wife! I will carry her on my back into St. Kevin's bed, and the saint will bless her." It is the popular belief here that the woman who has sat in St. Kevin's bed bears her husband the loveliest children.

We shook hands on parting, and I saw him no more. Another party had claimed his services as guide, and we, too, presently got our dinner, and after it a car. Miss Jane and myself occupied one side, while Mr. Macrie and his second daughter sat on the other. And thus, towards evening, with the sinking sun, we quitted the inn of Glendalough, and went further into the hills. We approached a richly forested and better populated portion of the country, and at once felt the vicinity of more active life. The evening breeze, spiced by the aroma of the forests, poured more freely upon us; and when we passed through a village, motley groups assembled in the road. The children, with their naked graceful feet, their round brown legs in the short ragged skirts, look like Murillo's angels, and have as much humour in their plump faces. The girls, standing in the doorway, or nodding to us from the meadows, are not handsome, but they appear very impassioned, and are remarkably piquant. They have black eyes, and know the use of them. They are

coquettish, like French women ; but their coquetting is more natural, and much more innocent. They coquette without purpose ; they will not make any one happy or unhappy by it. Strange creatures !

I fancied I discovered something similar in the landscape. Nature here is very wild, but not very liberal ; she gives the country more ornament than wealth. I have no recollection of waving wheat-fields and stately orchards, but the woods stand all the more exquisitely before me. It seems as if the forest has lavishly expended all its treasures in the scanty districts still left to it. I have never seen trees of such splendour : the obscurity of their avenues perfectly closed us in. Over the wall gleamed the laurel, the horse-chesnut rustled, the larch waved in the wind, the pine, the fir, the proud beech, the hardy oak, the linden—all grew majestically side by side, and the ivy clung around them. It twines round the walls and round the towers, round quiet farm-houses and lordly residences, round the ruins of cabins and the ruins of churches, round all the trees—it even twines round itself. All Nature, as if each individual growth had not enough in what she has imparted to it, is clothed in ivy. Is not that slightly coquettish on the part of Nature ?

And so we went through the Clara Valley. On our left, beneath the trees, plashed merry bright water—it was the pleasant Avon-mohr. How our horse trotted ; how the broken foot-boards rattled ; how we tore up hill and down ; and how our merry driver poured out the names of mountains, rivers, and villages, right and left ; and how many old stories he found time to tell us ; and how Mr. Macrie declared that the day could not end

without some terrible accident, and that the driver would do better to hold his horse in than tell old stories. And past us flew many a black-eyed country maid; and the hills flew past, and the sun sank deeper, and the sky poured its purest evening peace over us and all the world. The larks, too, were here again, and sang and twittered in the blue atmosphere over us as they rose and sank.

The wood ended, and we entered the wide open range of hills. The sharp-peaked chain of Glendalough filled the west with a purple blue mass; the sun had collected over it a dense fiery mist, and opposite, in the far east, glistened the "gilt spears." Gradually, as the heavy golden fog changed into a transparent cloud of light, which would cheer us for a long time, a fine blue undulating line became visible to the north.

"Do you see those hills?" the driver asked, as he turned round on his seat, and pointed his whip-handle to the north; "it must be clear weather to see them—they are fifty miles from here, and called 'the Hill of Finn's Wives.' I never saw them so well before, and, if you have no objection, I will tell you an old story about them."

"A capital story," said Mr. Macrie, when the driver ended his tale, which is so old that I will not repeat it. "And what's the name of that place on the top of the hill?"

"Rathdrum, sir," the driver said.

"Rathdrum! Let me see, what is there worthy of notice there?" He opened the Picturesque Tourist, in which he held his finger incessantly, and read to us: "'The horse, however, if it has come from Glendalough, should have a draught of meal and water, and the traveller take the

refreshment that best pleases him.' Good, good, you shall have it. Driver, what refreshment do you like best?"

"A glass of potheen always pleases the Irishman best."

"What, potheen!—always potheen, always exciting drinks! The horse might grow wild, and so on. No potheen, I say; the Picturesque Tourist, too, mentions nothing about potheen. Take a draught of meal and water, and give the horse beer—I mean, beer for you and water for the horse, but not potheen, driver."

The driver said, "Very good, sir," and we slowly approached the town. Rathdrum has seen better days: it was celebrated for its flannel factories. There still stands opposite the market-place a stately building, visible a long way off, with a large cupola: it is the flannel hall. It stands empty, and below it, on the market-place of Rathdrum, is a long row of ruined and deserted cabins, in the centre of which are the police barracks. A true Irish picture, and yet Rathdrum looks much better than many an Irish town. The neighbouring copper mines make up to many of the inhabitants for the decay of the flannel factories, and the situation of the town is exquisite. In the doorways along the gloomy narrow street, which runs up the hill, sat the pretty Irish girls, allowing the lads to pay court to them; they saluted the passers kindly, and returned every hand-kiss with great zeal. All looked after us and smiled; only the high police of Rathdrum stalked stiffly and in a lordly way past us. Not a look or salute was deigned us, for the high police is a cosmopolitan ruffian, and troubles himself about nobody whom it dare not take up or annoy. We stopped at the inn, and

then went on in the evening cool, after horse and driver had been refreshed in the prescribed way.

The Vale of Avoca commences just behind Rathdrum. Gentle hills and meadows, and farms with white walls, stand in the foreground, and behind them is the dark green forest, and, in the distance, the mountain range. Two streams—I must call them so, as they babbled so noisily—animated the darkening distance on either side. The landscape grew gradually softer, every sharper outline was lost, and only the waving wood on the hills, the noisy water in the valley, and the blue cool mist of twilight, remained to us.

The car rolled slowly along, and I followed it on foot at a moderate distance. I walked where Thomas Moore had walked fifty years before me; I stopped where he had once stopped—here, where the waters meet, on the celebrated bridge, where he sung his loveliest song. Above the pine-forest behind me the last purple clouds trembled in the softest azure; opposite, the dark chesnuts waved; and across the bright green meadow glistened the white houses of the little village.

All had become silent: not a human sound was mingled with the solemn voice of the summer night. At length, when I was compelled to join my party again, I heard Mr. Macrie's loud voice, and the driver was doing his part, too, in the conversation.

“Do you know,” the first-named gentleman shouted to me, “that this is the spot where Mr. Thomas Moore delivered his celebrated speech at the meeting of the waters?”

“And that over there, on the Connery hills”—the second-named gentleman overpowered his voice—“the

Motty-stone lies? Just look along the handle of my whip—that is the rock there. It comes down every first May morning to bathe in the meeting of the waters and pay a visit to this stone under the linden-tree. At that time there is great virtue in the water, and whoever is so lucky as to see the stone roll down and bathe directly afterwards in the water, is cured of every sickness.”

Mr. Macrie shrugged his shoulders in pity, and looked at me. “A driver,” he then said, while the latter took the trouble to point out the Motty-stone to the girls—“a driver! you must let him speak now and then; but there are really very simple drivers in Ireland.”

We then climbed on our car again, and the “simple driver” let his horse trot merrily through the glorious twilight. On our right, the Avoca now flowed broad and still, and closely-grown trees, through whose crowns the moonbeams played tremulously on us, begirt its shores. How pleasant the valley looked in its new magic! The road, too, grew every moment more lively with laughing girls and singing boys returning home from Wooden-bridge pattern. At the sight of so many merry faces, we thought it our duty to console our driver, who had lost a day’s fun.

“Ah,” he said, “no Christian in Ireland has so many shillings as he has opportunity to spend at jolly patterns; not a Sunday where, in a circuit of twelve miles, there are not thrice as many patterns.”

“Whence in all the world do you get so many saints as are required for these name-days?”

“Whence, your honour? I don’t know. I only know that they are here, and that we have enough for ourselves and our children, and our children’s children, and all eternity. We have on our green island, God bless it

three thousand saints, blessed saints, sir, and great performers of miracles.”

“And how do you celebrate these patterns?” I asked further.

“As you see, sir; with drinking, love-making, and every sort of nonsense.”

The driver was right. I saw that instances of the three sorts were going on around us in the bright moonlight. Some of the passers-by had got most piously intoxicated, and could not stand in honour of the saint; others had yielded to the sweet promptings of their heart, and were walking arm-in-arm with their sweethearts; often enough, indeed, our horse was brought to a stand-still, because a whole squadron of loving beings advanced in battle array, and only on our driver's earnest appeal opened the barrier of their arms and souls for an instant to let us pass. The band of holiday-makers generally—for I cannot say whether the drunkards and lovers did not, each in their special fashion, play tricks as well—surrounded the other two groups, teased some, annoyed others, and had fights, at times, to the accompaniment of yells and curses. There was plenty of row and fighting, and the sweet Vale of Avoca began all at once to smell very powerfully of whisky and shillelahs. I constantly looked round for my Minnie in the black velvet jacket, but could not discover her, as so many other black-eyed girls passed in the moonlight.

The beauty of the landscape grew step by step; hills again begirt us, and immense trees rustled over us, while in the depths the silvery Avoca murmured through the foliage. With a sharp turn we at length drove round the hill and into the yard of the Wooden-bridge Inn. This inn was at the moment the centre of the nonsense, and you can imagine how things went on, though only

in the lower rooms, as the upper ones were reserved for visitors. The worthy hostess did not seem to set much account by the lower classes and the pattern. "When it's ten o'clock they must be off," she said; "I sent away the music at nine, else they would sit here till to-morrow morning."

In a rather large room, not higher than an ordinary man, which was full of the worst smells and most unsupportable steam, sat the honourers of the Wooden-bridge pattern round a sadly burning oil-lamp. The rising smoke of their tobacco lay in impenetrable layers over their heads. Ten or twelve of them were drinking out of one glass: there was no sign of excess. They had no music, as I said, and the landlady had given orders they were not to sing. The waiter told me there was not a farthing to earn by these people; they could not stand any drink, but were at once intoxicated. On my intercession, however, permission was granted them to sing one more song; but that must be the last. I stood in the open doorway.

"Joe!" a couple of old fellows shouted, who were sitting over a half-filled whisky-glass at the end of the room—"Joe, you must sing."

Joe said he must make haste to catch up his girl, who was waiting for him: he had not a moment to waste. But the others would not listen to this. The girl could wait, they said, and he must sing. Joe got up and banged the table.

"Silence!" he shouted; "I will sing. Look out to join in at the right moment, and not act like drunkards by beginning too soon or too late."

"What?" some young fellows seated in the window

shouted. "Whom do you call drunk? You mean us, you vagabond! you scamp! you bad lot! Hallo, hallo!"

"Silence!" the others shouted. Joe struck the table a second time, and declared that they envied him everything—they envied his singing, they envied his girl. It would have come infallibly to a fight if the old men had not got up, and said that any man who lifted a finger should be turned out, and Joe was to sing. Matters became quieter, and Joe sang "St. Patrick was a Gentleman." This song is one of the most popular in Ireland, and the whole company raised a shout of joy as he started it. He sang with a voice which no one, not even a professional envier, needed to wish for. But he sang bravely, that is true, and he leaped and danced and banged the table when the chorus was to strike in. And the latter, composed of men, women, and children, some half drunk, others completely so, also banged the table, and made a tremendous row.

When the song was over, everybody shouted loudly and unanimously for fresh drink, for singing produces thirst, and the waiter brought for more than a hundred shouters not quite a dozen glasses. He might be right in his assertion, that there was not much to be gained from such people. Whisky is the favourite subject of their most fiery songs, and yet they cannot stand one-half of what a German drinks before he begins to sing, and not one-third of what the Englishman drinks after he has long ceased to sing. They get intoxicated with uncommon rapidity: their hot blood is in a moment excited, and then there is the deuce to pay. They fight with sticks and throw stones, and their wives—if they

do not prefer to get drunk too—have a great deal to endure from their husbands' intoxication, and that not merely in the lower classes, I heard it whispered.

Before the inn door stands a group of four tall, stately ash-trees, from which the sign hangs. The leaves glittered and shook in the bright moonshine. Under the trees sat several policemen: the moon, that shone over the hill into the fresh green valley, played most romantically on their black, polished helmets. On the opposite bridge, beneath whose arches the Avoca pours into the open valley, six fellows were fighting, apparently under police inspection; and they struck one another's heads so energetically with their sticks, that it might be assumed they were experimentalising which were the harder, the sticks or the heads. I crossed the bridge, and following the high road, approached the wood. A car stood there, drawn up by the ditch, and in it sat a child, whose white socks glistened in the moonlight, while the feathers in its hat oscillated in the night breeze. The child was witnessing a rare sight: in the ditch some six men were fighting, one of whom was its father, and yelling they would murder each other; and the wives, one of whom was its mother, were lamenting and crying they were poor lost creatures; while a man—a species of umpire—walked behind the fighters, and picked up the hats they lost in the heat of the combat. The whole scene was illumined by the bright moon of an August night, the same moon which had risen over the sweet Vale of Avoca, and by whose light I saw that the men wore gold chains, and the women silk dresses. But, ere long, a new scene attracted my attention.

About twenty paces further on, a girl ran across the

road, wringing her hands, and shrieking, "Joe! my Joe! where are you? Oh, Joe, where are you?"

On a heap of stones by the wayside sat an elderly woman, crying amid tears and sobs, "Oh, Heaven, if we were only at home! Oh, Heaven!"

I walked nearer, and who else stood before me but Minnie with the velvet jacket!

"What is the matter, girl?" I asked.

She recognised me with glad surprise.

"Heaven be thanked!" she said, "it is you! Oh, help me, help my mother!"

She seized my right hand, her mother seized my left; the two women trembled terribly.

"What is the matter?" I asked; "what has occurred?"

"Oh!" cried Minnie, "they are going to kill us!"

"Oh!" the mother cried, "don't you hear them yelling?"

In truth, I heard a hoarse sound, that proceeded from somewhere near in the wood.

"We were standing here," Minnie said, "waiting for Joe, and there came a drunken boy whom I don't like, and never liked, and said I must go with him. Joe was a drunkard and a rogue, and sitting in the inn, singing, and not thinking about going home with me. And when I ordered him to go his way, he said, 'No, I must go with him;' and he seized my arm and tried to drag me away. Then I screamed, and my mother screamed too, and we defended ourselves, till another boy came and said it was a disgrace for an Irishman to attack two women, and the two began fighting, and everybody who came up fought, and ran into the wood. Holy Virgin! there they are again!"

At this moment a band armed with sticks of every description burst from the wood, and rushed with shouts towards the spot where the women stood, who hung on my arms and implored me to protect them. Fate was so kind as to support me in this highly critical position, for hardly had I, with very doubtful hopes of success, placed myself before the two defenceless creatures, ere Joe came up with a shout on the other side of the battle-field, leading a dozen fresh combatants. The fight was soon over; Joe and his friends knew no mercy, and a general flight soon cleared the ground. Then Joe came up and received his girl and her mother from me. I gave Miles Doyle's message, but there was no chance of the kiss this time. I did not think about it; or, if I did, I said nothing. Against this kiss not only the flour-sacks, but the shillelahs of all Ireland seemed to have conspired.

When I returned to the inn all was quiet, and in the coffee-room on the first floor sat Mr. Macrie, with white choker and dignity peculiar to him when eating and drinking, at the head of the tea-table; his daughters on either side, exactly as at Glendalough. The map was there too, and the cigar that went out every moment, and the box of spills. We took leave of each other that evening; for Mr. Macrie was going off with the twins the next morning, while I stationed myself comfortably in the inn, in order to enjoy a several days' siesta in the most delightful scenery which Nature has created in the Wicklow hills. I felt that I wanted some rest before going further, after all I had seen and heard.

The days passed away like a pleasant, happy dream. I did nothing but walk about under trees and by the quiet waters; I climbed up the hills, and laid myself on the soft green grass, reading Moore's poems; I met

many a stray child in these solitary wood-meadows, and let them tell me stories and sing me songs, which I have faithfully preserved. All was most charmingly blended in a rosy picture, of which I have only a few settled recollections.

Thus, I remember the house in which I passed these exquisite days. It stood pleasantly, with its white walls, small windows and balconies, under the green pines which grew down the hill-side, almost touching it. The three other sides of the view were closed in at a moderate distance by rich, well-covered hill-slopes, and the foreground was occupied by meadows through which the Avoca babbles; I remember the old bridge over it, the picturesque clumps of trees, the farm-houses and buildings scattered over the valley and on the mountains. Along the white walls of the house bloomed white and red roses in glorious profusion.

I remember that on the rose-entwined balcony of the corner wing, a lovely young woman often appeared in a white dress and with golden tresses, that fluttered in the breeze among the roses; at times, though, an elderly, grey-headed man stood behind her, with his right arm round her waist, and his left pointing to the distant hills.

I remembered the often-traversed, ever dearer path to the meeting of the waters and to Castle Howard. They were dark walks under sycamores and beeches, the most splendid I ever saw: the most fragrant avenue of trees under which I ever walked. The waters flowed by my side, and the melody they sang became familiar to me, and the dearer every time I heard it. Castle Howard rose from the forest glen, and in the shadow cast by its walls rested cleanly cabins. Upon the walls, between

clumps of laurel, lay children with Murillo faces. In the wood behind the cabins is a large tree, round which the ivy has twined so heavily and luxuriously, that the life has been squeezed out of the trunk and the lower branches, and the majestic tree only serves as a support to the ivy-wreaths. Under this tree I often sat for hours: then I returned to the more lively high road. There are no ruined castles and keeps in this picturesque country: partisan and religious wars inexorably swept away these last fragments. But in this pleasant valley there is no lack of crumbling cabins and deserted villages, while every third house inhabited seems to be a public. The only literary memorials are the signs "licensed to sell beer and spirits;" and what may be the stores for sale in these wretched and lone cabins, which are often so narrow that the inhabitants can scarce lie side by side? A bottle of whisky, another of gin, enough to intoxicate the carter who drives his wretched animals past. Nothing can be more picturesque than these carts and the human beings who animate the highway.

I remember an old crone, in a long cloak composed of countless tatters, each of a different colour, and the whole, fluttering in the breeze, looked like the plumage of a huge uncanny bird; and the naked dirty legs and thin yellow arms were visible with every breath of wind. And her eyes were large and dark.

I remember an Irish girl, with black hair hanging wildly about her head, with dark-brown eyes and red jacket: she sat cowering in a donkey-cart. Two boys in felt hats sat on the shafts, and the donkey trotted on in the shadow of the chesnut-trees.

I remember, further, a very elegant car with a quick trotting pony: two pretty, healthy maidens in silk dresses

were seated in it; their faces glowed with such a ruddy hue, and their dark hair was so smooth; a delicate hand held the reins, and the pony leaped with pleasure and shook his mane. I shall never forget this road, it was one of the most frequented in Ireland, although ever more quiet than the most solitary German highway. When I crossed it, the wood running down to Wooden-bridge received me. I remember the pleasant wood glade, with its juicy blackberries, the peasant lads that lay under them, and the sheep and goats that pastured on the slope; and what a glorious evening was wont to follow the glorious day! It was then quiet in the pleasant house: the moon rose over the hill, only the roses at the window whispered, only the ash-trees under the gay sign stirred, only the waters under the old bridge babbled.

I remember that at about this hour the windows in the corner room were opened, and through the rose-bushes of the balcony, on which I had seen the fair young lady in the white dress, soft music sounded, and a pleasant, gentle woman's voice sang the accompaniment. I never heard but one song—"Oft in the stilly night;" so soon as the melancholy finale had died out in the moonlit night, I could hear the pianoforte closed, and then all was again deadly silent save the whispering of the roses, the ash-trees, and the water.

CHAPTER VI.

THE LAKES OF KILLARNEY—THE PARADISE OF IRELAND—THE TORC-VIEW HOTEL—A PLEASANT WELCOME—THE WEATHER—AN EVENING STROLL—IRISH SONGS—THADY THE DRIVER—KILLARNEY TOWN—THE IRISH CHARACTER—THE ATLANTIC TELEGRAPH—THE RUINS OF AGHADOE—THE CATHEDRAL—THE UNHONOURED DEAD—THE CHAMBER OF DEATH—ANTIQUE SCULPTURE—THE SICK BOY.

ROUND the Lakes of Killarney is the paradise of Ireland, not the dreamed-of paradise of the Irish legends, which is said to lie on one of the fabulous islands in the western sea; but the terrestrial paradise, full of indescribable beauty, which we feel with our mortal senses till it naturally leads us to thoughts of the immortal. What would the forest be without those mysteriously frowning aisles in which the ghost-like echo dwells? What would ocean be without its undiscoverable depths, with the submerged cities and the fairies dwelling in the old-fashioned gabled houses? What would the earth be without the heaven which peoples our imagination with the most blessed images of our love and our faith?

I hardly know how I passed the long sad road leading into the paradise round the lakes. I know, certainly, that the sun poured its perpendicular beams on wide parched-up valleys, on many a straggling town, and many a half-decayed village; I know, too, that the railway journey across the

island, from the north-east to the south-west of Ireland, lasted till late in the afternoon; but I recollect no more of the people in the carriage, and the scenery outside it, than I do of the panting of the engine, the snorting of the steam, the rolling of the wheels. But I can recollect one pleasant occupation yet, just as one recollects a pleasant dream, whose graceful apparitions are interwoven with the dark monotony of night. I recollect that I had the whole day through a song of Moore's in my head. The song relates to one of the pleasant solitudes around the Lakes of Killarney, which was destined presently to become dear to me, and it bore me away on rosy wings from the oppressive sultriness and monotony in which I was held prisoner; yes, it even increased the effect as it depicts the parting from such inexpressibly beloved objects, which invited me so promisingly in the distance. I must say that, under the spell of this song, I entered my new abode with a feeling of severance, and that from the first moment to the last I remained there, a melancholy hue was cast over the loveliest scenery I ever saw, or probably ever shall see.

It was late in the afternoon, when at last, after a long journey through bogs, the blue sharp-edged mountains advanced, behind which lies Paradise, a new world for me, with undreamed-of marvels, and glowing hearts beating in concealment. The carriages had grown emptier: the townspeople had got out at their towns, the countrymen at their villages; only a few had to do with the dream-land of poets and fairies, and these few were lost, after the train had run into the station, among the coachmen and porters waiting there. I, too, soon sat between my red carpet-bag and my white one—my faithful companions in the land of the saints—on the outside of a little car,

and left it to the driver and to chance whither they pleased to carry me. The car turned at once into the town of Killarney, to show it to me, the driver said; for the abode designed for me lay on the other side, a good hour's drive further, high up in the mountains. The first thing on entering Killarney was a row of ruined and deserted cabins, among which stood only a few which still seemed inhabited. Then came a street which looked slightly more habitable—though here there were ruins enough between the houses—and which, judging from the shops and sign-boards, must be the street of trade and strangers; but this was poor and bare when compared with the streets of our towns. But how the soul expanded, how the chest dilated, when the trees came behind the last house, and the road seemed lost in the reverend gloom of a splendid avenue of lindens! There is but little wood round the lakes; where mighty trees once rustled as lords of the forest, naked walls of rock now look down into bare ravines; but where they have been left standing, they surpass imagination in fulness, splendour, and beauty. It is as if, confined to a small space, they wish to tell the wanderer at one glance what they once must have been.

High walls closed in the road on either side; and behind these walls I could see splendid parks with waving trees and glistening meadows, in which many lovely flowers grew, and many lovely maidens walked. Soon, however, this pleasant neighbourhood came to an end, the way grew flat and smooth on both sides, ran up a barren hill, and instead of trees, flowers, and meadows, there were only a few scattered mud cabins. Paradise has its weak side, too, I thought; but I little thought that I should spend some of my happiest hours in one of these

clay huts. Then the road mounted sharply, ran into a well-tended pine-wood with high hedges round, and when we reached the open plateau on the top of the hill, I saw there a stately building with many windows and doors, like a fairy castle, with the suddenly opening view of the whole Killarney Paradise, and this fairy castle was the Torc-view Hotel, whose enviable denizen I was now about to become, and in the doorway stood Mr. Hurley, the host, and he said that it was fine weather to-day, thank the Virgin—and I was very welcome—and a nice lofty room was ready for me up-stairs.

I thanked the good man for the highly pleasant salutation, and took possession of my room with my two carpet-bags. It was very nice and lofty; oh, I shall never forget good, honest Mr. Hurley in my life for giving me this room. On two sides my windows looked out in the valley, and its every charm peered in at me and delighted me at all hours. In the morning, it was the sun, rising over the Maagerton and Torc mountains, which leaped over my bed-curtains with its feet of light; in the evening, it was the whisper of the wind from the mountains and across the lakes which lulled me to sleep; and if I awoke from my dreams in the night, the lakes, glistening in the radiance of the moon and the stars, appeared before my eyes fairer even than my dreams.

What Mr. Hurley said about the weather was only to be taken figuratively. Everybody is aware that in the lake districts of Killarney it rains every day at least once, often only once, when it never ceases from morning to night, and while the weather had hitherto been very warm and sunny, it now suddenly changed as I reached my destination. When I entered my room and looked out for the first time through the window that formed a

framework to the exquisite world beneath me, a depressing rain was falling on the landscape. At times the sun broke through; but it was a sorrowing sun, a sun in tears. Before my window a lawn stretched out, and under the hedges stood tall glistening pelargoniums, and white and red roses timidly and affectionately intertwined. All looked melancholy; autumn had already spread its wings over the earth. The meadows slope gradually down, and far below is Muckross Lake, also called Torc Lake, with its little rock islets, the central of the three lakes of Killarney. A wooded promontory stretches out into the lake, and reflects a dull silvery hue; behind it rise the hills in fine bold outlines. But over these crests brood clouds, and the distant mountains disappear in the mist, and the glen beyond the lake, still a pleasant riddle to me, is filled by a fog in which the setting sun breathes many wondrously red tints, turning from red to green with every beam of light.

After a while there was a knock at my door. In walked a thin little man in a tail-coat, who told me he was Banson the boots, and wished to recommend himself to me. As he looked to me sharp enough for his avocation, and seemed to perform it with a liking, I readily took him into my service, and since the "Red Boatman" of Heidelberg, who has been summoned to his fathers after an illustrious career, I never formed the acquaintance of a more faithful boots than the one at Killarney. Next came a pretty girl, with a white apron, who made a curtsy, and said she was Biddy the chambermaid, and wished to take his honour's orders. Last of all appeared Michaulin, the black-bearded, muscular waiter of the Torc-view Hotel, who told his honour that dinner was ready. And I should really have enjoyed

my dinner, had not the tall pelargoniums and white and red roses been there, and the meadows, and the lakes, and the hills, and the sinking sun, and the mist that buried the landscape. My heart began to beat loudly, and longing coursed through all my veins.

I went to the door, plucked a white rose, and walked along. In the heavy evening mist that sank upon me, I walked towards the hill over the lake, across grey patches of heather and stubble fields. I climbed over hedges and mud-walls, and came to the skirt of the lake, where I stood on marshy ground, beyond which I could not advance. I found my way at length to firmer ground and a little wood, in front of which stands a solitary cabin. I stopped before it, for strangely sad sounds entranced me, like long heavy sighs; then they broke off sharply, died away like an echo, and a pause ensued. I pressed myself under the rain-laden hedge, and when the song ceased only the leaves rustled, the stubble cracked, the wind moaned, the rain poured softly down, the dogs barked. Then again the mournful song, then again the pause, then again the echo, as if from my own bosom.

I walked on, and, as I came nearer, a flash of light met me through the leaned-to door. I saw a girl sitting in the ruddy glow of the fire upon a low wooden stool, and before her stood a spinning-wheel, on which her arm idly rested, and by her side was a straw cradle, in which a child was slumbering. I could hardly distinguish the girl's features, for she sat with her back half turned away from me; but I saw her dark hair, which hung loosely down her back; I saw the red petticoat she wore, the white naked arm which she had dreamingly laid on the spindle, the naked foot which rested on the treadle,

all at one moment brighter, at another weaker, as the fire flared up or sank down; in the rest of the cabin there was deep gloom. For the world I could not have ventured to cross the threshold, and yet I could not tear myself away. I stood as if rooted to the spot. And then the song began again, and with beating heart I fancied I heard the following words :

“The fairies are dancing by brake and by bower,
By brake and by bower,
By brake and by bower,
The fairies are dancing by brake and by bower,
For this in their land is their merriest hour.”

The echo died away sadly, and I still stood there timidly listening. At this moment footsteps were heard coming down the path through the wood, and I soon perceived in the dim light of the room the form of a little elderly woman, who, wrapped in a cloak, was approaching the cabin. I hurried away in the direction I had come, through stubble and over hedges and mud-walls, and at length gained the road leading to the top, wet through and through. Banson the boots, Biddy the chambermaid, and Michaulin the waiter, were very glad to see me return: they had frightened themselves into the notion that I had lost my way in the bogs round the lake. I went to bed. The wind roared in the tall chimney, and, as I fell asleep, I fancied it was the song of the girl in the red petticoat, and I dreamed the whole night of the cabin, and the slumbering child, and the fairies “by brake and by bower.” But the next morning the scene had quickly and marvellously changed. Now, the fresh morning breeze flew across the lakes, and the meadows were called into fresh life by the night’s rain. The pelargoniums, too, did not look so sad as on the pre-

vious evening, while on the roses hung the last dew-drops, sparkling in the sun like tears of gladness.

Beneath the window stood a man blowing the bugle. This man I was presently to grow very fond of—hearty, honest, good Jack Lowney! And then the hills! Above the tops of the more distant ranges the sky had cleared, and a white glistening cloud floated along, and the enigmatical glen shimmered wondrously in the sun and shade and mist. Further and further wandered the sunshine, and the more the soul expanded, the further the glance flew across green meadows and yellow fields, and the heart thought of old home, while the lakes flashed like silver. Then I threw up my window and looked out at my new home.

Nearly two hundred years ago, a German wandered through this country, and he wrote a book about it, which was published at Nuremberg. The name of the man is forgotten, but his book we have still. It bears the date of 1690. In this book we read that Kerry is “in many parts impassable and full of mountains. There are no dangerous animals there, excepting wolves and foxes.” What we now celebrate and visit as a paradise was at that date as little known to the civilised world as Spitzbergen or Greenland. Where my predecessor, the German wanderer of the seventeenth century, sought his way through a gloomy wilderness, I now sit in a bright, cheerful room, looking out of the window.

My inn stands on the slope of the Torc Mountain, in front of the wood which skirts its last mound. It is over lake Muckross, the whole length of which can be seen, with all its bays and wooded inlets, with its stubble-fields and meadows, on one side; on the other side the mountains rise sheer from its edge—unwooded, naked

mountains, but forming a fine outline, bold crests, and majestic slopes. Over these, with their picturesque peaks rising behind each other, the Schechyn Mountain and the Tomies; behind them again, glowing in the still ascending sun, the Purple Mountain; and in a wide circuit the Maagerton hills, "the Long Range," and Macgillicuddy's reeks; and in extreme distance, flashing out of the shadow of the mountains, the last strips of the upper and lower lakes.

Such was the panorama which lay expanded before me so soon as I threw up my window. How fond I grew of that window! Nor shall I ever forget the table under it, for I sat there for hours, looking out, dreaming and weaving verse. What I wrote at that table must be honest and true. As I sat here I could hear the heart of Mother Nature beating. All was so quiet, so silent up here: but rarely a carriage, a fiddler, a horn-player, or a bagpiper entered the cleanly yard. I did not once hear harp-playing here, for the harp, once Ireland's pride and darling, has disappeared from real life, and its memory only lives in the classical home of all that is beautiful—in the tales of the nation and the songs of its bards.

After breakfast and the first cigar, which will never again taste so pleasantly to me as it did under the roses of Killarney, on the plateau before Mr. Hurley's hotel, Banson the boots walked up, and asked leave to introduce Thady the driver to me. Thady was no exceptionally clever fellow, that is true, and it was dangerous to ask him too many and perplexing questions; but he was a good fellow, and did all he could, and loved the three things he called his own in this world with equal fervour—his horse, his wife, and his child. When he laughed, he did so heartily; and he usually laughed

when spoken to, and that, too, when there was no special reason for doing so.

"We must start soon," I said, when Thady stood before me, hat in hand.

Thady laughed loudly, and said at last, when he had finished, that I might be right. After I had asserted several times that we had no time to lose, and he had laughed several times too, and replied that I might be quite right, he at length went off to put to his horse, and as his cabin was not fifty yards from Torc-view, he soon returned with his light car. A young woman with a child in her arms was sitting on it. At this moment Thady had all with him that was his own, for, as I afterwards learned, he was a tenant of Mr. Hurley's, to whom the cabin and the car also belonged. The young woman, with the child in her arms, sprang from the car, and walked towards me with an enormous cudgel.

"Here, your honour," she said, "poor Thady's wife brings you a shillelah for your walk in the blessed land of Killarney. May the favour of the Virgin be with you and your shillelah!" She then handed me, with a reverential bow, the immense cudgel, and Thady, who was busy with the horse, burst into such an enormous laugh that the horse fancied harm was meant it, and began whinnying loudly; whereupon Thady shouted, "Wo, Miss, wo-o-o!" for, as I afterwards remarked, Thady altered his manifestations of affection towards the animal in the most varying way. At one moment he called it "Sir," then "Madam," and at times, as I have said, "Miss," according as he wished to praise, encourage, or reproach it, in which, strangely enough, the word "Miss" was employed in reprobation. I, thus blessed and armed, now mounted the car, which flew along

merrily beneath the pleasant morning sun and the scudding clouds.

Soon the pleasant avenue was reached which had greeted me so cheerily on my arrival; there were the high walls again, the lawn orchard, and the flowers growing on it. Only the maidens were wanting. Perhaps they were still in the fair land of dreams, which never seem so sweet as when the first sunbeams cross them. Magnificent country houses rise on all sides, close down to the lakes. Among them, I may mention Lord Derby, Lord Kenmare, Lord Brandon's cottage, but, before all, Mr. Herbert, M.P., the richest landowner in this district, and the happiest, for he has two daughters, who are praised and honoured by the country people as the kindest, most benevolent, and philanthropic of beings. With rare liberality, all these landowners have opened their parks—which, in extent, and through the constant alternation of wood and meadow, hill and water, often resemble small kingdoms—to the public in cars and even in boats, and the whole merry band who are wont to follow travellers with bagpipes, horn, and fiddle. The gates of Mr. Herbert's park were already wide open, and a broad paved road, leading under dark chesnuts, invited the wayfarer to enter.

We drove past, however, in the direction of the town. Here all looked like a fair: musicians blew and fiddled before every door and window; the guides, still idle at so early an hour, lounged on stones and let the morning sun warm them. But when a car was heard, they sprang up and hurried after the traveller, offering their services and singing their own praises. Women, with fruit for sale in large baskets, joined them; men, with wooden toys made out of the wild arbutus peculiar to the place, inter-

posed, commanding silence. Among the houses walked early-rising strangers with the green handbook under their arms; pretty women with long blue veils fluttering in the morning breeze; all surrounded by a crowd of idlers, women with red kerchiefs round their heads, Irish girls with naked feet, and boys with ragged trousers and coats. Here and there, in front of a deserted cabin, whose window-frames were filled with stones, and chimney overgrown with long withered grass, a group had assembled; on the half rotten wooden door a placard was fastened, which recommended, in large letters, emigration to America. So far as I had hitherto seen, and later experience confirmed it, the population of these parts appeared to me neither so good-looking nor so cheerful as that of Wicklow, as if the softer form of those hills had exercised a beautifying and conciliating influence on the character and features of the inhabitants. Here, where the people has been much less blended with the German elements, the Irish national type appears more decided. The female sex is here peculiarly piquant in its way—even more piquant than in the Wicklow hills—for while the body is smaller and fuller, the face is remarkably original.

The eye is always dark-blue, dark-grey, or dark-brown, and the hair is black, hanging loosely round the head. The complexion has a yellowish tinge, the nose is broad and large, and the lips are red and plump, and it is easy to see that they know how to kiss hotly and passionately. The Irish national costume, here and everywhere else, consists of rags; rags of every description and the most daring shape, rags of every hue and every stuff, rags on the head, rags on the body and the legs and on the feet, where the latter are not quite naked. Rags

are the sign of recognition of the Irish people, as ruins are of the Irish land. As far as may be constructed out of these rags, it appears to me the national custom that the female sex wear a short-skirted red gown and a handkerchief over the otherwise naked breast. When going out, they wrap their heads either in the cloak which they throw over it, or in a gaily-coloured handkerchief. I never saw a woman in a bonnet or cap; those in easy circumstances wore a long black cloth cloak with a hood over the head, after the Spanish fashion; these, too, are wont to wear shoes and stockings.

The peasant girls of Killarney are the most modest and pure beings under the sun, and even with respect to their clothing, they make a virtue of necessity. Still, it seemed to me curious, and is so still, that only the women in southern and western Ireland go about in this half-naked state, while the men wear the most excruciatingly heavy boots I ever saw in my life. In the attire of the men I noticed nothing peculiar: like their Celtic brethren in Wales, they all wear a blue tail-coat with "gold" buttons, though in a far more pitiable condition, short yellow plush breeches, and a beaver hat often picturesquely enough crushed, with grotesque holes, and brim fluttering in the breeze. And, even more than I had noticed elsewhere, these people speak English like a language strange to them—somewhat like the French torture it. It is difficult to understand them. When together, they always speak Irish, though it is no longer pure, but mixed with corrupt English. All in this people is patchwork—clothing, abode, and language.

After making all sorts of small purchases, and telling Thady we would proceed, at which he naturally laughed, we started. The horse, which this time was a "Sir,"

pulled heavily, and we soon rolled along the thick alley of beeches. A wire ran over our heads on wooden poles.

“That goes to America.”

Thady laughed so heartily that the horse began whinnying again. It was the wire of the Transatlantic Telegraph, whose first childish lisplings had just set the world in amazement, until, four weeks later, the unfortunate rending of the cable put a temporary end to the undertaking. But Ireland, that most wretched of countries, is yet destined to see the noblest triumph of the human intellect erected on its wildly rugged coast; the spark will flash along the wires over the poor clay cabins, and Thady the driver will stand under it and laugh.

We proceeded towards the hill on our right. We left behind us the residence of Lady Headley: they are venerable trees under which this lady lives, doubly honoured for her own gentleness and the name which her lord left her, who has long been resting in a grave on the hill-side. The road at length became steep and irregular; we only met a little girl driving two cows before her, not a soul else. At the top of the hills are the ruins of Aghadoe, revered throughout Ireland for their sanctity. They consist of the remnants of a round tower, the remains of a small cathedral church, and the walls of a building called by the people sometimes the “Pulpit,” sometimes the “Bishop’s Chair;” and this was certainly the abode of the Bishop of Aghadoe, who once occupied a high position among the spiritual lords of Ireland.

The whole plateau round these ruins is covered with graves; even the ground inside the ruins is filled with dead, who have fallen asleep with the hope of a happy resurrection. I leaned over a grave, while Thady unhar-

nessed his horse and let it crop the tall weeds in the churchyard. Around me were the ruins, and the shadow of the round tower fell over me. Below, in the glen, stood the little girl with the two cows; and before me, beyond the pale stones, was a glorious prospect. Far below lay the blue Lough Leane, glistening in the morning sun, and the pleasant islands on it were covered with the most splendid verdure: here, Rabbit Island; there—I saw it for the first time while standing on a grave—sweet Innisfallen; and there Moss Island with its ruins, its woods, and the glorious legend of O'Donoghue, the giant spirit of the May-night—green islands, like emeralds set in blue and gold enamel. Then came a large tract of wood, and behind the last foliage the still blue surface of Muckross Lake flashed, and along the opposite shore ran the rugged hills, shadow and sunshine alternating in their dark blue ravines.

To the left of the tower stands the old cathedral, now roofless, but which must once have been a stately building and of great antiquity. In the “Annals of Innisfallen,” a monastic chronicle written six hundred years ago in the monastery of that island, the church is called the “Old Abbey.” The walls are still there and the tall windows, and the ivy grows like primeval trees out of the crevices, and spreads its roots, like brown hands with long claws, round the decaying stones. The entrance door is of exceptional beauty—an Irish round arch with zig-zag ornaments, while the windows in the eastern choir bear traces of the earliest pointed style. In the nave lay heaps of stone and planks of coffins. On a moss-covered gravestone were piled thirty to forty human skulls, bleached in the sun, with arm and leg bones between them. In one corner were two exhumed coffins,

in which lay half-decayed corpses, rotting in the air, and still surrounded by the rags they had worn in life. Oh ! never shall I forget this fearful chamber of the dead ! the end of all things had never appeared to me before so horrible and disgusting. And ever more skulls—more coffins. Here was one which seemed never to have been in the ground ; the wood is perfect, and retains its yellow colour. Tall thorns have sprung up wildly around it, and the overpowering smell of the mountain thyme is mingled with the pestiferous odour of corruption the hot sun exhales here. Thady no longer laughed ; as he walked hesitatingly after me, he took off his hat and said a paternoster. I walked on over human bones. When I approached the western choir, a number of crows rose hoarsely from a distant corner, where they had been sitting on a broken coffin. They flew over the walls and disappeared from sight behind the pine-wood.

“Thady,” I said, “how can your people behave so mercilessly to their dead ?”

Thady looked at me and was silent ; but he did not dare to laugh. Has then this people really sunk to such a depth of wretchedness, in which apathy for life leads to a forgetfulness of the holy duty towards the dead ? And yet it is notorious that no people was wont to bewail its dead so violently, so passionately as the Irish, and that it surrounded the death-bed and the grave with a poetically religious halo, whose last traces are nowhere deeper rooted in the national conscience than here round the Lakes of Killarney. Such contradictions are the surest signs of dissolution. On one hand the terrible traditions of the past ages are held on to with sickly excitement, on the other, the most ordinary daily commandments are left unfulfilled. Down in the valley

the death-lament and the crouching women ; here, on the hill of Aghadoe, coffins rotting above ground, and the crows sitting on them. Here, in the cathedral, the wild shrubs and the mountain breeze, that howls and moans through them, and there, so soon as you step through the gate round which the ivy whispers, the lakes and the pleasant music of Moore's Irish melodies.

But the horrors of the churchyard of Aghadoe were not yet exhausted, for when I went on, and stepped between the graves, I noticed that they were all covered with rotten coffin boards, skulls, and bones of every description, iron rust-eaten rings, and tarnished metal plates. Oh, ye dead of Aghadoe, how shamefully ye have been deceived ! Ye fell asleep in the hope of a happy resurrection, and now your bones lie about here like fallen thistle-tops. O dead, I no longer envy you your faith and your hopes !

A roughly-hewn stone, two or three feet in height, which had probably been part of the sculpture of the old cathedral, attracted my attention. Coarsely carved on it in relief were the Saviour on the cross, the Mater Dolorosa kneeling by His side, while over her soared the angel with the cup of holy blood. The turned-in feet of the figures, the contorted arms and legs, the utter simplicity and poverty of the treatment, indicated a very great age. I was just stooping down to examine the sculpture more closely, when I had an unexpected vision which startled me terribly. Behind a stone in the grass, among the bones and coffin boards, lay a human being—whom I should have taken for a corpse, had he not risen slowly and painfully at the moment I approached him—so pale was the face, so hollow the cheeks, so sunken the eyes, and so wildly did the lifeless hair hang over his flattened temples.

“For Heaven’s sake, Thady,” I asked, “what is that?”

Thady, who in the open air had become the old Thady again, began laughing loudly, and told me that it was Larry, the sick boy from the village. When I asked what was the matter with him, Thady shrugged his shoulders, shook his head, laughed once more, and at length said he could not tell me.

The “sick boy” was about twenty years of age; he could not stand on his legs long, and seated himself with a hoarse sigh on the old stone which bore the Saviour’s crucifixion. He was in the last stage of consumption, and it could be seen that his strength would not carry him beyond a few weeks.

“Hallo, Larry!” cried Thady, “how do you find yourself by this time, my boy?”

“Bad enough, the Virgin forgive me!” Larry said, in a scarcely audible voice.

“What brings you up here on the hill, my boy?” Thady asked further.

“The woman in Dunloe Gap—old Sally—she—told me—that—I was to pluck—flowers—yellow flowers—on the graves—of Aghadoe—and make tea—of—them—then perhaps——”

Larry could say no more; with the “perhaps” on his lips, he sank together again, and sat, unmoved by all our attempted consolation.

“Poor Larry!” said Thady, as he went off to put the horse to. When he had finished, he came back and asked the sick man if we should take him down into the valley. He shook his head, and when our car had long left the churchyard, I could see, on looking round, that Larry had laid himself down in the sun again among the skulls and coffin boards.

CHAPTER VII.

BEAUFORT-BRIDGE—OLD SALLY—KATE KEARNEY—THE GAP OF DUNLOE
—THE BLACK LAKE—THE ARTILLERYMAN—A LOVELY WALK—KATH-
LEEN O'MORE—AN OLD FRIEND—THE KNIGHT OF DUNLOE—WAKING
THE ECHOES—THE UPPER LAKE—LORD BRANDON'S COTTAGE—AN
OLD BACHELOR—THE BOAT—THE ARBUTUS—THE LAKE ISLANDS—
HAPPY JACK—THE LAST ROSE OF SUMMER—AN ACCIDENT.

FROM the hill of Aghadoe we went down easily and rapidly into the forest-clad valley, on the banks of the Loe. We all seemed to feel more comfortable—Thady, the horse, and myself—when the trees waved so cheerily over us, after passing from the terrors of the uncovered Golgotha. And like a waking salutation of fresh, happy life, a gay party of riders met us on Beaufort-bridge, that crosses the river here, out of the gloom of the trees that closed over them; among them were pretty women with fluttering veils and long yellow gloves. Presently we entered the heath that begins here; the road was a gentle ascent, naked rocks draw together, huge blocks of stone lie in the damp swamps, and the surrounding scenery grows intensely sad, the more so because the sun shines on it. Miserable mud cabins cower here and there on the hill-sides, or in the rock-holes. Beggars lie about the highway, or crawl out of the ditches, on hearing the

sound of wheels. The car creaks, the horse pants, as it tugs up-hill over stones and boulders. Little girls buzz round the weary wayfarers, throwing heather flowers into the car, and asking a penny for them, when a farthing is thrown down. Begging in this country is carried on *à prix fixe*. A boy came, requesting a penny "to buy a book with." The most terrible vision among these forms of the heath was an old witch, with rolling glass blue eyes, and ponderous rags round her thin limbs, who limped out on a stick from a cabin in the midst of the bog. As our car approached, she raised the stick in signal to the driver, who at once stopped.

"What are you thinking of, Thady?" I said. "What do you stop for before this old horrible creature?"

"Oh, sir," Thady replied—"oh, sir, don't be angry. If I did not stop, she would abuse us—and if she were to curse us—oh, sir!——"

In the mean while, the old witch had hobbled up; she stretched out her lean, yellow hand, towards me, and cried in a panting voice,

"Master, if it please your honour, a penny or two!"

"Who are you?" I asked, after paying my black mail.

"Who I am?" the woman squalled—"ha, ha, ha! Old Sally of the Dunloe Gap—only ask Thady there who I am—ha, ha, ha! Thady, how's Master Hurley's black-and-white cow, that broke its front leg, eh, Thady?"

"Thank you, Mother Sally," Thady said, "it is in pain."

"I can think why it is in pain. The little 'gentlemen' are pulling its legs and pinching it. Why does Master Hurley let his cows go on the Fairy Hill? Have we not grass enough on the flat pastures? I have forbidden it a hundred times. Who won't hear, must feel!"

“Mother Sally,” I said, “What do you think of sick Larry?”

“Nothing good,” the woman answered.

“How long will he live yet, do you think?”

“So long as the yellow flowers remain on Aghadoe.”

“What’s the matter with him, then, mother?”

“I can’t tell you; you are a stranger. Good-by, master, and thanks for your present.”

With these words she turned away on her crutch towards another carriage, which was now coming up the hill.

We, however, were approaching the Dunloe Gap. Not far from its entrance is a little cabin which seemed rather cleaner and better than the others we had hitherto seen on either side of the bog; a little, but not much. Cars, saddle-horses, and donkeys, were standing on the sunny spot before the door, and a fiddler was sitting on a bench in front. A charming creature with a deliciously fresh face, blue eyes, light hair, and naked feet, was walking up and down; but in spite of the soft hue of her hair and eyes, there was something strange and wild in her whole appearance. She brought the drivers and donkey boys outside something to eat and drink, and then re-entered the cabin.

Thady, after laughing, assumed a rather serious face, and imparted to me the fact that this pretty creature’s name was Kate, and she was the granddaughter of that wondrously beautiful Kate Kearney, to whom the song referred, which I must know. A very great Irish lady, who had been here once on a visit, and drunk milk at Kate Kearney’s, wrote the song; her name was Lady Morgan, and she had been living for many years in England, and was perhaps dead. Kate Kearney, the grandmother, had

also been long dead, but the song still lived which told of her beauty, and was daily sung round the lakes, every child knowing it by heart. By this time our car had halted at the door, and as I got down, I told Thady I didn't know the song, when he eagerly cried "That's it!" The fiddler had scarcely drawn his bow over the instrument, ere the drivers and horse boys quickly collected round him, and began accompanying his shrill tones with a song, which commenced like all Irish ballads, freshly and pleasantly, and broke off unexpectedly and sharply with a melancholy cadence. Thady, too, holding his pony with his right hand, joined in, and from the interior of the cabin stepped several gentlemen and ladies to listen to the well-known song.

The last echo of the ballad died away plaintively over the sunny solitude. Some of the carriages started up the mountain road, others down it. The saddle-horses dispersed, the donkeys trotted on. I was soon left alone with Thady, and entered the cabin. The bare-footed maiden of Dunloe brought us a glass of milk, into which she poured a few drops of "mountain dew," gave the driver something to eat, and left me to my reflections. Either the song or nature was in the wrong, or the dark beauty of the grandmother must have been converted strangely in the granddaughter into blue and blonde. A powerfully-built man, with a strong beard, walked past me to the door, and a child of about five years of age, was crawling about the floor.

"Well, Kate," I said, "how old are you?"

"Fifteen, sir," Kate answered.

"And this child here?"

"Is my sister."

"And the man at the door?"

“Is my brother.”

If Thady the driver ever laughed in his life, he did so now, when Kate went off to meet a car just arriving.

“Eh,” he said, and laughed so loudly, that the horse outside began ^{to}whinnying, “so long as I have known Kate, and that is getting on for twelve years, she has always been fifteen. Eh, this Kate doesn’t grow any older; and her husband has been her husband for these seven years, and her child is six—eh, eh, the Kate!”

Thady was not to be brought to himself, and the lump of bread stuck in his throat, and he coughed and laughed, so that the tears ran down his cheeks. In the mean while, Kate had returned, and when it came to paying, I noticed why she had made herself so “interesting.” The renown of her grandmother and her own fifteen years, were the capital on which she obtained extraordinary high interest. She asked for her glass of milk only three shillings—and, in truth, I could not refrain from laughing with Thady, when I thought what strangely naïve forms overcharging and plunder can assume among a primitive people on desolate moors and under savage rocky ravines.

Not a hundred paces from Kate Kearney’s cabin commences the Gap of Dunloe. The dark spires of Macgillicuddy’s reeks, with the gigantic Carran Tuel on one side, and the Purple Mountain and the Tomies on the other, enclosed us, the path grew narrower and more stony, and the daylight seemed lost in the shadow of the rocks. The ice-cold waters of the Loe poured over the rocky bed with a hoarse murmur, and the “Black Lake,” surrounded by tall reeds, stood there as if frozen. The fearful solitude between the lofty, gloomy, lifeless mountains, received us. But all sorts of strange forms, such

as only the fantasy of such a mountain gloom can conceive, rose up at measured intervals. Presently there came a man in a blue-tail coat and yellow breeches, who carried a cannon under his arm, and awoke a threepenny or sixpenny thunder in the black stony mountains, according to your order.

After the Jupiter Tonans of the Dunloe Gap disappeared, a strange group emerged from behind a rock, bearing some resemblance to a gipsy encampment. Little horses were tethered together in herds, a few donkeys were browsing on the hard stone-crop, brown men were lying among them, sleeping or smoking, others were leaning on the poles of carts, while others, on hearing our car roll up, came and offered their services as guides. This is the halting-place for carriages and cars: for the path runs from here to the lakes for several miles through the mountains, and only leaves room for the careful tread of the pony or donkey. The drivers and cars are always grouped picturesquely here, awaiting the return of the company, and the guides and donkey boys, who offer the wayfarer their services on his walk across the mountains.

With his pleasantest laugh Thady informed me that he must leave me here; but that I should find at the other end of the glen a boat with four rowers, which Mr. Hurley had sent there to meet me. I declined the companionship of a guide, as I intended the more fully to enjoy solitude in this its gloomiest abode, if my thoughts were allowed to roam unfettered. So I said good-by to Thady; and the last I saw of him was, as he patted his horse's neck, and said, "Now, Madam, we'll be jolly, won't we?"

But I was soon destined to feel what Goethe sang apparently in such paradox :

Wer sich der Einsamkeit ergiebt,
Ach, der ist bald allein ;

for I had not gone more than a hundred yards ere I sat down to rest, overpowered by the effect of the solitude, on a stone by the path-side. Here I felt myself, for the first time in my life, alone ; for in the forest, where the tree-crowns wave and the flowers whisper, man is not alone, even if he seek its gloomiest shadows ; nor is he alone on the ocean, where the storm-wind howls annihilation, and the waves, those living grave-mounds, open and close before the quivering eye. Man is never alone so long as he feels within himself the eternal connexion with all that lives ; but here life seemed to have ceased, and every living thing visible flew quickly past, as if terrified. It must have been late in the afternoon, for the light fell down lustreless and heavily, without any admixture of more friendly colour tones, displaying the naked emptiness of this spot in all its monotony. The rocks lay around ; grey stones, sparsely overgrown with moss, formed the slopes ; water, cold and colourless, rustled down on all sides in the runnels, while in the distance were the black lakes, unmoved by wind or wave. If the eye followed the rocky path, it noticed a deserted cabin at the summit. The door was closed, and no smoke rose from the the tottering chimney. Opposite it was a meadow grown with grass, that looked pale and naked, like the growth on sand-hills, with a few scanty hay-cocks without scent or colour, and three or four cows, as thin as those in Pharaoh's last dream. The melancholy effect was heightened by the fact that grey walls, built by human hands, ran round the mountain, the meadow, the

hay, and the cabin—it seemed as if the gnomes that lived in the ravines around, had thrown up breast-works. Sun, wind and cloud, moved rapidly past—at one moment all was bathed in a dazzling effulgence which glided coldly along the rocks, and then again in gloomy shade; the wind roared through the glens, then all became deathly silent again, or only the spectral murmur of the waters was audible. Then, a band of mountain ponies passed, the drivers hanging carelessly on the saddles; then a solitary wanderer, a peasant with a boy in his hand, and a dog in front; and then again, all was gone but the sun, the shade, the reeds, and the stones.

I know not how long I sat there, much less how long I could have sat so, as all was so quiet. Time seemed to me at least to stand still, and I could have remained there till my heart stopped beating; but in the midst of my dreaming, I suddenly heard the pleasantly melancholy singing of several girls; it seemed to come nearer or retire according as the wind blew the sound towards me. The singers were soon close to me; they were four or five barefooted maidens, with light red shawls wrapped round their heads and breasts, and offered the wayfarer scanty refreshment here in the mountains where there is often not a cabin for miles. They carried little bottles of goat's milk and wooden cups; so soon as they noticed me the song broke suddenly off in the midst of a shrill cadence. They came up to me and offered a cup of milk. After drinking in five minutes more goat's milk than I had done before in my life, in order to gain their good graces, I asked them to continue their song. At first they would know nothing about a song they had been singing. It was a stupid song, they said, which they only sang to pass away the time, it was not worth repeating before so

"noble a gentleman;" at length, after all excuses were exhausted, they began, and sang the first verse, and then suddenly broke off, declaring that they had forgotten the rest. However, when I told them I would pay sixpence for every verse, they remembered the rest, and sang in very bad English the ballad of "Kathleen O'Moore."

After the song was ended, I rose from my seat and continued my solitary walk: they followed me a little way, said "good-by," and turned back down the mountain, after which all became silent and solitary again.

Before me was a tremendous rock which seemed to block up the path. The peasants call it the turnpike of Dunloe; just behind it begins the most terrible part of the pass. The rocks come so close together here, that nothing is left save the narrow path, and beneath, the contracted bed of the Loe, which—at times disappearing in subterraneous canals—connects Loughs Cushvalley and Auger. The water murmurs hoarsely, the wind murmurs hoarsely; the rocks are continually piled up more wildly and grotesquely. A giant city seems to stand there in the parting daylight, with rocky towers and rocky houses—a city of terror and death, for there are black chambers in the naked rock in which some families lived during the famine—and died. The mountain vulture devoured them, and the wind spread around the ashes of their bones. Here an old clumsy bridge leads over the river, grey upon black; beyond it the water widens out into a fourth lake, Lough Dubh, or black lake, and on its edge the rocks are piled on each other to the height of a moderate-sized hill. I climbed up them, not without some difficulty and danger, and when I reached the moss-covered top, the view changed magically. The

mountain stream still murmured beneath me, the old weatherworn bridge still stood there, and the road I had traversed still ran up the mountain-side like a white thread through a black cloth; but at the spot where the rocks separate over the last gloomy lake, which is set in a frame of jagged stone-work, they form a species of natural gateway, through which the eye suddenly roams over a pleasant sunny landscape.

And in that pleasant sunny landscape I soon distinguished two ladies, with their waving veils, leaping their active ponies over the boulders, and an old gentleman with white cravat and gold glasses, seated on a donkey, and, as I heard on his nearer approach, quarrelling and arguing with a one-armed man who drove the donkey. He was an impudent rogue, the old gentleman shouted; he told him the donkey was quiet, and the donkey was savage, and leaped when there was nothing to leap over, and would soon throw him off; not a word of truth passed his (the driver's) lips, even by accident, and his statement that he had lost his arm in taking an eagle's nest was only a delusion with which he hoped to excite the sympathy of strangers and plunder them all the more securely. The old gentleman was right: the donkey had an awkward trot, and threw its rider from side to side unmercifully, on which occasion I noticed something rattling like a telescope in a leathern case, and a drinking-flask. I'll bet that the reader has recognised the old gentleman; at any rate, on seeing in the bargain the Picturesque Tourist in his right pocket, and a huge map of Ireland in the other, I was not a moment longer in doubt, but shouted,

“Hurrah, Mr. Macrie! Welcome, Mr. Macrie!”

The rock walls returned the cry of my happy heart like

thunder, and I was startled at my own voice ; but how the donkey was startled, on which Mr. Macrie was mounted ! It made a dangerous leap forward, put its head between its legs, and Mr. Macrie no longer sat on its back, but on a moss-covered stone that lay across the road, and around him were scattered the telescope in the leathern case, the drinking-flask, the Picturesque Tourist, and the large map of Ireland. I quickly clambered down the hill, and it was on my breast and in my arms that Mr. Macrie again awoke to the consciousness that he had escaped another gruesome peril.

“ How delighted I am ! ” he said, as he picked up his scattered property and cleaned the dust off, “ to find you again ! I felt in this wretched glen as in a robber’s cave, so many ragged vagabonds are collected in it. They plundered me with their milk and whisky, they pursued me with their begging and pertinacity ; I did not wish to ride, but it was of no use, I could not get rid of that one-armed scoundrel, I must mount his donkey. A man is not safe of his life in this miserable glen : cannons are fired, I am led past fathomless abysses, I am forced to climb up precipitous walls, and, last of all, I am mounted on a donkey ! May Heaven punish me if I ever get on one again ! ”

In the mean while the two ladies had cantered up ; the veils floated round their ruddy faces, and if the twins of Belfast had ever looked charming, it was when they stood on this gloomy barren height, like two blooming roses. Great was the delight with which the companions of Glendalough and the sweet Vale of Avoca saluted each other here ; and while we were still engaged in questions and answers, Mr. Macrie had settled with the one-armed driver after much disputation, and dismissed

him. The young ladies reluctantly dismounted from their ponies, but Mr. Macrie said it was much pleasanter to walk along this portion of the mountain-path, as it would soon end. While mounted on his donkey he had constantly trembled for the lives of his beloved daughters. The "beloved daughters," whose faces still beamed with the delight they had felt in galloping about, cast their eyes down, laughing, and we walked along together.

Here stands a solitary cabin, built against a rock promontory. We had just reached it, when suddenly the sound of rapid hoofs could be heard from the mountains, and a very extraordinary person came galloping down the ravine. His cap, with its peak loosely waving, was put jauntily on his head, his coat fluttered in the breeze, his scanty hair hung over his temples. The horseman was evidently no longer young; his face, which had become yellow and parched in the sun, displayed numerous wrinkles; still, there was something in it which gave it a look of liveliness and freshness—a certain something which I could not decide at the first glance whether it were sagacity or folly, for both have the strange quality of keeping a man eternally youthful. In addition, the quaint rider had an enormous mouth, whose corners evidenced good humour, and a very long nose, in the deep furrows on both sides of which deep humility lodged, and grey eyes—"cunning eyes." On his left side he carried a corneopan, while on the back of his horse a large book was fastened; but the loudest thing about him was a pin with a black glass head, which he wore in the front of his shirt. All this I saw and noticed in the first moment; for, in the second one, the rider had stopped his horse, and shouted to us, "All

hail and welcome from Sir Patrick, the Knight of Dunloe!" Mr. Macrie had already clutched at his hat-brim to salute the knight. "All hail, all hail!" the girls and myself said. "Who are you?"

"Who I am, fair ladies?" he said, as he dismounted and took the large book from the saddle—"I am Sir Patrick, the Knight of Dunloe, and here is my patent, if you please." With these words he opened the book, laid it on his saddle, and requested us to draw nearer. Mr. Macrie did not do so; he said he did not see why he should trust to the magnanimity of wild animals. The horse did not look as if it ever had eaten its fill in its life, much less behaved savagely. We, however, advanced. "Look here!" said Sir Patrick; "Crofton Croker, the celebrated poet, appointed me Knight of Dunloe with this patent. Read it, sir." I did so, and all my readers probably know the lines.

Mr. Macrie, with the most contemptuous glance in the world, let the hand fall again which he had lifted to his hat. "Another vagabond," he said. "I never saw so many in my life as on this afternoon."

Sir Patrick invited us to inspect his album, and we certainly saw many haughty names from every land in this book of distinguished folly. Sir Patrick had scarce noticed that I was a German ere he uttered the most pressing entreaties that I would inscribe my name. As he had pen and ink by him, no excuse was possible; and while the two girls looked roguishly over my shoulder, their father walked up and down abusing, and Sir Patrick held the old cripple and warned it to behave properly, I began writing. The old cripple behaved properly, with the exception of a few involuntary twitchings, which resulted partly from hunger, and partly from

fear and general weakness, but, all united, made some curious marks of interjection in my caligraphy. My friend the reader, if ever he should visit Ireland and see the book of Dunloe's Knight, will find what I wrote at page 51.

After the two girls had admired the strange fashion of German writing—in which they regarded the twitches of the horse as ornamental flourishes in German text—Sir Patrick closed the huge tome, fastened it on his saddle, and blew his horn. The echo had not died away in the mountains ere a boy of about fourteen appeared in the doorway of the solitary cabin.

“Hallo, Mickey!” Sir Patrick shouted. “Mickey!” Mickey came.

“There, my boy,” Sir Patrick said, “ride my horse home, and give my compliments to her ladyship, and tell her that I shall not join her before ten o'clock this evening. I have found pleasant society, and shall go across the upper lake again.”

“Did not I guess at once,” Mr. Macrie groaned, “that this scamp was also a guide? I don't want one. I won't have one.”

It was only on the girls' earnest entreaty that Sir Patrick was allowed to give us the honour of his company. He then took from us the cloaks and trifles we had hitherto carried, but Mr. Macrie obstinately refused to surrender his upper coat, which hung over his shoulder. He did not need a guide, he said, and walked pouting behind us. Mickey, too, set off on Sir Patrick's horse, and was soon lost in the beginning twilight and shade of the glen. I could not agree with Mr. Macrie in many things, least of all in his repugnance to the Irish guides, horn-blowers, donkey-boys, and vagabonds. I never

found anywhere a more amusing set of people. This is their appropriate vocation, for which they were created, and they carry it out heartily. They guide the stranger, drive donkeys, and play the bugle, from a liking for it, and more through the pleasure music and vagabondism afford them than for money's sake. At every spot where there was an echo Sir Patrick requested us to sit down (with the exception of Mr. Macrie, who held his ears, because he declared he could not stand the row), and so soon as we were comfortably settled he began blowing the bugle, and the stubborn rocks became alive, and bandied the sound from one to the other, and echo born of echo united in the strangest chords and harmonies. Sir Patrick only blew four notes, *c, e, g, c*, but they effected marvels. At last, after the four notes had done countless times all they could do, we asked our knight to be good enough to play an Irish melody, for that would produce an exquisite effect; but he said that four notes were just enough for the echo, it could not repeat more. Although not quite convinced, we allowed him to be in the right.

Thus we reached the end of the glen, and seated ourselves (with the exception of Mr. Macrie, who declared that he could not stand a draught) upon a projecting rock, with the last rays of sunlight sporting round us, and looking along the shaded Reeks at the celebrated Cuhm-a-Dhubh, or Black Valley, on our right. It is an ever-gloomy, ever-damp swamp, into which the human foot ventures only involuntarily, and not without danger. There is no forest gloom, no luxuriant growth of shrubs and bushes; on the contrary, it is naked and almost free from vegetation: but the mountain walls that enclose it are remarkably lofty and savage, and their broken shadow

falls on the motionless mirror of the lake and brown morasses around. But the valley appeared less gloomy and frowning at this moment, when the mild lustre of the setting sun threw a kind parting smile to it. And high above this rock-enclosed plain, with its valleys, its river, and lake, was the blue sky, with its gold and silver, forming a cupola to this rock temple. And on one of its ston sedilia, with the shrubs and heath whispering around us, we all sat (with the exception of Mr. Macrie, who complained about cold in his head continually).

As soon as we reached the valley again several girls leaped forth from under the bridge over a dry arm of the Gerhamin river, with red handkerchiefs round their heads—the last messengers of the terribly romantic, never-to-be-forgotten Dunloe Gap. They ran after us for a while, singing Irish ballads with peculiarly sad and sorrow-laden melodies. We had only too gladly listened to them, but Mr. Macrie protested against the foolish nonsense these ragged creatures were singing, and so energetically against any further delay, that no choice was left.

We had finished with the mountains; behind us the glens faded away in the summer vapour and mist, and the prettiest sight Killarney had to offer us now began sportively to unfold its magic charm. We approached the shore of the upper lake. Here, as everywhere else in the vicinity of the lakes, proud hospitable mansions of the nobility adorn the shores; and we walked through the splendid beech avenue of Lord Brandon's cottage. How pleasant life must be here, under the luxuriant trees, upon the green velvet grass, in the mild air and the fairy-like mist of glorious fables and melancholy songs! Lord Brandon's cottage now belongs to a rich

gentleman from Dublin, who lives a bachelor in this most exquisite of all hermitages, and spends his time in photographing flowers and trees. The photographic machine, lightly covered over, stood by the side of the path. If I were the rich gentleman from Dublin, what far lovelier and glorious things would I “fix” than trees and flowers!—first, a pretty little wife, with light-brown hair, dark-blue eyes, good-tempered lips, and innocent smile; then, when I returned to my house on the upper Killarney Lake two years later or so, a fair-haired, rosy-cheeked boy must sit to me; and a couple of years later, if Heaven willed it, the sweet, angelic head of a girl; and presently, when the pleasant little wife had become a good, hearty mother, when I myself was old and grey, and the rosy-cheeked lad had grown a fine man, and other angel heads were smiling round the sweet angel head, then, then—but not before—I would photograph trees and flowers in memory of the time when we all wandered together, young and happy, in the sunshine of life! Oh, were I the rich gentleman from Dublin! Still, he must be a good-tempered, philanthropical man. That he is so alone, in that blessed corner of the world, where a couple would be in paradise—that is surely wretchedness enough. Perhaps, though, he has loved—he may have loved unhappily, or his maiden died, or proved unfaithful. Leave him his flowers and trees; they do not die or prove unfaithful, and he has permitted you and us and the whole world to have a share in this silent, tender company. The gates stand open, the paths, the shrubberies, the lawns. No limitation is visible; only two things are asked of you by the board which the good, kind old gentleman has had fastened on the stem of a tall linden. First, pluck no flowers—surely you

will not do so ; it is the only thing left him in this world besides the trees ; then, write your name in a book, which lies on a table near the tall linden, that “coming strangers may see in this book whether friends and acquaintances of theirs have visited the spot before them.” Good, kind old gentleman, may Heaven bless thee !

So soon as we reached the lake, four tall men leaped up from the oziers in which the boat was lying. They were my crew, whom Mr. Hurley had sent to meet me. I invited Mr. Macrie and his daughters to join me ; but the old gentleman hesitated a long time, till he was compelled to yield to the inevitable. First, he asked if there were no possibility of returning to Killarney by land ? There was a possibility, namely, by returning through the Gap of Dunloe ; but he must have considered the night-laden mountain-passes as not much pleasanter than the blue sunlit ripple of the lake, for he capitulated at length on behalf of the latter. He asked how deep the water was, and if anything was known about storms, currents, and so on. The answers were all unsatisfactory : the lake was very deep ; the water could become very restless and dangerous ; the depths had already claimed many human lives, and claimed them afresh with every year.

“Very good,” Mr. Macrie at length said ; “I enter the boat, but I do so unwillingly. And if an accident were to happen, then——” He did not complete the fearful sentence, but wrapped himself in his great-coat, and plumped himself on the centre seat.

The girls got in too ; Sir Patrick, with the horn, entered, I sat myself down by the tiller, the boatmen laid on their oars, and we flew out into the lake. All was

bathed in gold—the sky, the green shores, the deep lake with its oscillating water-lilies, the boat, and ourselves. The islands, quiet and green, and full of evening red, glided gently past us—lands perfectly bathed in sunshine. They stood there, like great bouquets growing out of the water. These islands derive their peculiar character from a tree of thoroughly southern growth and splendour, whose true home is really in the south, and which Spanish monks are said to have brought as a present to the monastery of Innisfallen more than a thousand years back. In the language of science the tree is called the *arbutus unedo*. The English call it the “arbutus,” the Irish the “myrtle of Killarney.” It is found at several parts of southern Ireland, but nowhere so abundantly as on the shores and islets of the Lakes of Killarney. Its brilliantly green heavy leaves seem to have drunk in the sun, and while the red strawberry-resembling fruit is ripening on some of the fantastic gnarled branches, on others the tall lily-like flower is bursting from its green capsule. Thus, uniting the charm of maidenhood with the magic of womanly maturity, the myrtle of Killarney glistens—a wondrous tree in a land of wonders! From the wood of this tree many little pretty trifles are carved by the inhabitants, and the traveller rarely neglects to purchase some as a pleasant reminiscence; for if he can resist the artless wood-carving, he must infallibly succumb to the sparkling black eyes of the arbutus-girls who offer them for sale, when he meets them on the skirt of the lakes, or under the sombre, solitary avenues at the foot of the hills.

The myrtle isles of the lakes are not inhabited: only a few of the larger were so in earlier times; now a close growth of wood covers them, and at many open sunlit

spots, meadows run down to the lake, on which a few men are busied at hay-time. On the slope of one of these hilly islets stood a mother with her daughter, near freshly thrown-up heaps of hay, which sent their fragrance across to us. She asked us, as we glided past, what the hour might be? So lost in the solitudes were these two beings, that time glided away for them without leaving a trace, like the murmuring of the waters and the whisper of the thicket. Not long after, we perceived in the distance a boat approaching the island, which was coming to restore them to humanity. We glided along over the gently heaving waters; scenes of exceptional beauty alternated with unexpected glimpses of steep naked hillslopes, which seemed to draw constantly nearer to the contracted shores. Sir Patrick, who had hitherto been talking in Irish with the boatmen—who did not honour him with his full title, but merely called him Pat—took up his bugle and began blowing his four notes afresh. These shores convey the most marvellous echoes. Sir Patrick blew as long as a man can blow, and the mountains and the echo were never wearied of repeating his *c, e, g, c*; but as even the most inventive echo can only produce the same thing out of the same notes, we gradually grew quite confused by the continued monotonous sound which surrounded us, at one moment growing higher, then dying out, wherever we looked, wherever we listened, behind us, before us, over us, on all sides at once, like a whirlwind, so that, what had at first sounded to us so enchanting, at length grew quite inharmonious and gruesome. All at once, as we ran into a bay opening out between the rocky shores, which glowed with the parting beams of the sun, a most pleasant melody struck on our ears, like a guardian angel descending from heaven. On

listening more attentively, we recognised the melody of the "Last Rose of Summer"—the most popular in the whole of southern Ireland.

"Happy Jack!" the boatman shouted. "That's Jack Lowney—that's happy Jack."

Not far from us a boat was drifting full of pretty girls and pleasant young men, and among them sat Jack Lowney, a stately man, with a long golden-hued beard, the celebrated performer of Killarney, and it was his bugle which had filled the sunny bay with the pleasantest sounds. Our boatmen had long shipped their oars, almost reverently; but Sir Patrick puffed at his horn more furiously than ever, and his four notes took all possible trouble to cross and drown Happy Jack's melody—in which, and in the heat of the action, they became faithless to themselves, and got into terrible disharmony. We found it difficult to put an end to our noble knight's unsuccessful attempts, which for a long while would not permit us to enjoy the music. At length we lay-to in silence; the tranquil oars flashed in the dark blue water, as the drops slowly fell from them; round our bark broad weeds rose and sank, as the water came and went; the shores, the bushes, were mirrored golden-green in the dark water; behind us the sun was setting, and its expiring fires dyed for the last time the track of our keel, which we had left for a long distance behind us on the motionless lake.

The player could scarce be heard—only the spectral echo, like music of the fairies. It seemed as if all the mountains of Ireland were repeating this favourite song of the people, for the sound was like that of an orchestra; it seemed as if Happy Jack's bugle had aroused all the melodies sleeping in the rocky heart of Ireland—that true

poet's heart, externally gloomy and closed—but a gentle sound, like a fairy finger, taps, and the heart opens and pours forth its golden melodies over the whole world. Yes, the Irish mountains are full of such golden melodies; but it is not every one who can wake them. Jack Lowney can do so, and hence is called Happy Jack. Indescribable was the effect, and hence it would be hopeless for me to attempt description. Let me evoke, then, the shade of Tom Moore, the singer like whom no one has appeared before or since, and refer my readers to his "’Twas one of those dreams," which describes his feelings at this very spot when hearing the same echo.

The song and its echo died away; the boat drifted towards the opposite shore; the sun had set, and the glory of our poor Sir Patrick with it. He was crouching in the boat unsympathising, and his horn was beneath a seat. We glided along through the pleasant Long Range, but he did not stir; we came to the celebrated Eagle's Nest, a rocky pyramid more than a thousand feet in height, at the base covered with wood, with its sharp point mounting into the clouds that collect around it. At this moment nothing was visible; it was almost difficult to distinguish the rock in the grey evening twilight, which here seemed all the more grey and gloomy in the surrounding landscape. Sir Patrick did not yet make a move, but Mr. Macrie had read in his Picturesque Touris tthat here was "the most perfect, glorious, and surprising of the Killarney echoes."

"Why do you not blow here, you vagabond scoundrel?" he shouted to the knight with the sorrowful countenance. Sir Patrick produced his horn from under the seat and blew; but the notes he produced were not perfect and glorious. His soul was sad, and his bugle

was so also, and his four notes produced a discord such as the Eagle's Nest had hardly heard in its past life of a thousand years. If Happy Jack showed us what sweet harmonies slumber in the mountains of Ireland, Sir Patrick supplied the proof that in the rocky breast as in the human one, a devil resides by the side of every angel, that only needs to be aroused in order to be seen and heard. To the accompaniment of this demoniac music we left the spot: rock re-echoed it from rock derisively; and when we at length reached open water again, night had set in, and a cold breeze had risen and crisped the heaving waters of Muckcross Lake, which we had just entered.

This lake, with its proportionately narrow basin and the enormous quantity of water that fills it, with its rugged shores and the rock masses concealed beneath the surface, is the most dangerous of the lakes, and difficult enough to cross by night. The boatmen said this plainly, and Mr. Macrie began trembling again, partly from apprehension and partly from cold, for the air and the water were growing more and more icy. But now Sir Patrick rose and sought to instil courage. He had made the passage with ten times as heavy a wind and far later at night, and not the slightest accident had happened to him, and were any accident to happen to-day, why he, the Knight of Dunloe, was to the fore. At first, Mr. Macrie would not hear Sir Patrick; but, as it is always sweet to listen to words of consolation, he could not resist for long, and allowed himself to be comforted; and above all—and that seemed to be the motive of the statement—he was led astray to stop at one of the islands to cheer his spirits with something warm, and grant the wearied boatmen time to recruit their strength. The boat was now steered to Dinish Island; Sir Patrick blew his horn,

and, when we reached the green strand, several men and maid servants had already assembled to wait on us and procure us the required refreshment. Torches were brought up, which, flickering irregularly, illumined the nocturnal scene with their uncertain red gleam. Mr. Macrie ordered whisky and hot water; the boatmen and Sir Patrick drank the whisky, and left poor Mr. Macrie the hot water. This was the very worst thing Mr. Macrie could have done to improve the present state of affairs. The fellows became intoxicated, and Mr. Macrie obtained no material improvement, either in his strength or confidence, from the hot water.

“Hurrah!” the men shouted; “we’ll be off again.” But we had not gone far ere a crack-crack was heard, and we were hard and fast on a ledge of rock. There was a scene of indescribable confusion: Mr. Macrie wrung his hands, Sir Patrick crept under the seat alongside his horn, the drunken sailors plashed about with their oars and poles. At length a little order was restored, and we glided safely off again into deep water, and we at length arrived in good condition in Dundag Bay, near Mr. Herbert’s park.

This was, however, Mr. Macrie’s last appearance at Killarney. I got a letter from him the next day, stating that he would not run any risks longer, but had returned to Belfast, where he would be happy to see me if I came that way.

CHAPTER VIII.

BACK TO TORC-VIEW—FIDDLER MICK—THE CABIN—A HEARTY HATER—
JACK LOWNY AT HOME—THE MYRTLE OF KILLARNEY—THE DANE'S
FORT—AN IRISH CABIN—THE GOOD PEOPLE—A FAIRY TALE—
DRUIDIC REMAINS—LISSYVIGGIN WOOD—THE FAIRY PALACE—THE
WET-NURSE—THE DRUIDIC TEMPLE—POOR LARRY—A TRUE-HEARTED
GIRL.

IT was late that evening when I returned to my friends at Torc-view. Mr. Hurley was standing in the door, and shook my hand with a perseverance and cordiality as if I were his brother just returned from the North Pole. The others, too, had cared for me in their pleasant way; Banson lighted me up-stairs with two candles, and when I entered my room, how delightful everything was there! A fire was crackling, a lamp poured down its shaded light from above, and the blue bed-curtains, half pushed back, allowed a peep at a little kingdom of peace, liberty, and love, in a world generally full of the opposite qualities. Behind these blue curtains a pair of black eyes sparkled as I went in. They belonged to Biddy, who wanted to surprise the effect her handiwork produced on the returning wayfarer. She was pleased because I was so satisfied. "Ah!" she said innocently, "she was fond of me because I was a Frenchman." She thanked the Lord when no Englishmen came, for they were all so rude, so arrogant,

and so domineering, and they didn't believe in the Holy Virgin, and hardly in a God, and she'd like to see the Irish girl that could love an Englishman. But they all loved *us*—all of them. "However," she added sadly, "we are nothing now." And when I said that their time would come again, she smiled mournfully, and replied, "God be with us!"

When I went down to the coffee-room, I saw that Michaulin had also done his duty, and more than that. The sweet Irish mutton tempted me with its savoury smell. Michaulin could not cease informing me of the advantages possessed by his fleece-bearing, grass-devouring countrymen; for in his way he was a great patriot, and his patriotism included with equal fervour the men, mountains, and sheep of Ireland. The dinner would have been duly discussed, had not music been again audible outside. It was the sound of a single fiddle, and Michaulin told me it was Fiddler Mick. I begged him to bring the lad in, and a black-haired fellow of about eighteen presently appeared, who played splendidly. He drank with me, and was soon quite intoxicated, but the melody became in consequence all the more fiery. His instrument was as bad as it well could be, and one string was broken. But Mick was a genius: had he been sent to school and then out into the world, he might have become a great man. As it was, he lived in his mountains, had never received any instruction, and only played what he had caught from his people, from nature, and his own heart. And they were chiefly sad melodies he played, and intertwined with wondrous variations. At length I asked him if he could not play a merry tune?

"Oh yes," he said; and began playing "To ladies' eyes around, boys."

The tune powerfully affected me.

"Come," I said to Fiddler Mick, "drink up your glass and follow me; we will go for a stroll."

It was late: the clock pointed to between nine and ten. The moon, which had risen behind the Torc mountains, seemed dissolved in heavy clouds.

A damp fog had settled over the valley, for round the Lakes of Killarney it must rain once in the twenty-four hours.

We walked for a while over the desolate moor; we came to ditches, hedges, earth-walls; at length we reached the flat shore of Lough Leane, but I could not see the cabin I had visited the previous night. Presently I grew anxious.

"Mick, my boy," I said, "is there not a cabin about here?"

"Not here, sir; but a little higher up the hill there are several."

Then we were silent again: the light murmur of the rippling waves—the wind in the heath grass—a scrape of the fiddle; that was all.

"Mick, my boy," I said at last, as I seized his arm, "I will describe the cabin to you more particularly."

I told him all I knew, and felt Mick's arm tremble when I spoke of the red petticoat and the sleeping child, but when I mentioned the fairy song, Mick shouted:

"By St. Patrick! that is her favourite song. It is she, the Myrtle of Killarney!"

The fierce emotion with which he uttered these words, and tore his arm from my grasp, did not escape me.

"The Myrtle of Killarney," he repeated. "Bridget, the prettiest girl far and wide, the best and the dearest. Bridget—oh, oh, oh!"

The trembling of his body now affected his voice; it trembled more and more violently, and when it at length settled into a deep sigh of pain, I heard him give way to his feelings in a flood of tears. It was a long time ere the poor fellow came to himself again. At length he stopped:

"Do you see the fort there?"

"Do you mean the hill?" I asked.

"Yes, the hill there. The cabin under it, before the wood—you must see the light plainly—that is the cabin."

I saw the light; it stood out like a yellow fixed point on the dark blue background of wood in the misty night.

"Shall I go with you?" said the fiddler, as he stopped, hesitating. "Oh, sir, I cannot go with you—I cannot see her—in truth I cannot! She never loved me, and the mother cannot abide me, and her uncle is my enemy—and that is my misfortune—and that is the reason I roam about the mountains day and night and can do nothing else—St. Patrick knows it—than play the fiddle."

I had again seized his arm, and he let me draw him onwards. We soon stood once more before the door where I had stood the previous night alone; it was closed; a light shone through the small window, but all was quiet save the wood behind the "fort." The wood rustled now and then when the wind came up from the lake.

"Take your fiddle, my boy, and play the tune you began—the merry one, I mean."

Fiddler Mick hesitatingly obeyed, but then sang the words to his own music.

Mick had just finished the last verse, when the door was torn open, and by the light of the fire, which now flared out into the night, a little, old, black-haired woman

appeared on the threshold, while I could see the red petticoat plainly in the background.

"Cursed boy!" the woman yelled, "are you there again? Have I not forbidden you a hundred times coming here, and disturbing us in the night with your scratching? Go to the devil, you vagabond, you skulker, you good-for-nothing scamp, you——"

"Mother!" poor Fiddler Mick implored, with a fervour to which I could have refused nothing—"mother, let me see Bridget only once——"

"Bridget will not see you, you fool; Bridget would be glad if you were a thousand miles away, you skulker, you——"

With these words the old woman was going to bang the door, when I walked up, seized her hand, and held it tight. She fell back a few steps in alarm, while I walked into the cabin, and Mick stood timidly on the threshold.

"Whom have we here?" the old woman shrieked, as she strove to loose my hold, and looked at me contemptuously from head to foot. "Some Englishman, who prowls round the cabin of Irish folk by night, with evil intentions? Plague take all Englishmen—God forgive me the sin—sickness, a spell, and all plagues be on the English enemy!"

"Good mother, listen to me," I said; but she would hear nothing, and went on storming.

"Out of my cabin!" she shouted; "I have nothing save these four walls; but honesty, virtue, and the fear of God have ever abided in them; would you take from the poor Irish widow the last thing she possesses in this world? Away, I say! I suffer no Englishman in my four walls; the English hung my eldest son on the gallows; the English drove me from Tralee; the English

—Short and good—and may God pardon me the sin—and so truly as I am an Irishwoman, I say, out of my cabin!”

Bridget, who had hitherto been standing timidly behind the great bed, in which the little child was gently sleeping, now walked forward. The glow of the fire made her red gown and red cheeks still redder; she stood there with naked feet, and had thrust her short black hair behind her ears, so that her charming face, with its dark glowing eyes, seemed set in an ebony frame.

“Mother,” she said, “the man is indeed no Englishman; listen how he speaks English; he is no enemy to us, are you, sir?” She then turned to me with a still deeper blush, and even greater confusion: “You are a good Catholic, like us, and you believe in the Holy Virgin?”

Ere I had time to answer this dangerous question, steps could be heard coming from the fort.

“Uncle!” Bridget exclaimed, excited by pleasure; “I know his step!”

“The uncle!” Fiddler Mick also shouted, who had hitherto been standing motionless, and like a ghost in the doorway—“the uncle!” And he rushed forth into the night, and it was not till he had gone a great distance that I heard complaining, heart-rending, unconnected sounds, which seemed to come and depart on the breeze.

I remained in the cabin, however. The door soon opened, which Mick had banged violently after him, and in walked a tall, middle-aged man, with an honest open face, true-hearted dark-grey eyes, and a well-trimmed reddish beard. I was not a moment in doubt: it was Happy Jack, whose bugle had aroused such an exquisite echo among the rocks of the upper lake.

“Whence so late, brother?” the old woman asked, heartily offering him her hand.

“God save all here!” said the honest man, as he took his sister’s hand, and kissed his pretty niece’s lips; “I must lead a party to-morrow at sunrise through the mountains, and shall not be back, perhaps, till the fourth day. We are going down to Cahirciveen and Valentia Bay, and I wished to say good-by to you, and kiss my darling little Granna, before I started; so that is why I came so late.”

“Granna’s asleep, uncle,” Bridget said, as she led Happy Jack to the bed. The bearded man stooped down and kissed the child, which started in its sleep, and threw its arms round his head. On turning, he saw me standing by the fireside, and watching this pretty scene.

“Good evening, sir,” he said, offering me his hand, which I squeezed heartily and honestly enough.

“You do not know me?” I said, after the first salute, “but I know that you are Happy Jack; and long before you knew who I am, I felt grateful to you for the lovely tune I heard you play this afternoon.”

“Ah, sir,” Jack said, “then you were in the boat which passed us on the upper lake. Sir Partrick was in it, if I am not mistaken?”

“Quite right,” I answered; “I have no heartier wish than that we may soon be together on the lake.”

“I shall be delighted, sir, when I return from Valentia.”

“So be it!” I cried; and Jack pressed my hand again in ratification.

“Now, is this gentleman English, uncle?” said Bridget, who had sat down on the side of the bed. “Mother treated him unkindly, and refused him hospitality, because she said he was a Sassenach.”

“No, mother,” the uncle spoke; “this gentleman is as little an Englishman as I am; he is a Frenchman or so, and a friend of the poor Irish nation, and when he enters an Irish cabin he must be welcome, and he is so in my sister’s cabin. Cead mille feailte, sir!” And again we shook hands.

“Come, smoke a pipe with me, Jack,” I said, as I produced my pouch, and a short clay pipe.

“I will do so; and great is the honour you do Happy Jack,” Lowney replied. Whereupon we lit our pipes and sat down by the hearth.

“When two men sit and smoke, they want a drink. Haven’t you a drop of whisky and a little hot water, mother?”

“Oh yes, uncle,” Bridget said, as she hurried to a cupboard in the wall with all the grace of youth and beauty, produced a bottle, and mixed us two jorums of steaming punch.

“That’s nothing,” said Jack; “you women must mix a glass for yourselves, for we must all drink our guest’s health.”

The old woman was not inclined at first, but the uncle’s persuasion, and Bridget’s silent entreaty, forced her to assent, and Jack and the old woman and myself hob-nobbed to our lasting friendship; to which she said, “If you are no Englishman, yes”—and her gloomy face all at once became cheerful. Then she handed the glass to her daughter, who came up to her with a certain degree of timidity, which only heightened her beauty; she raised her glass, struck it against mine, and I said “To all we”—“wish,” she hastily added, and took so deep a draught, that her mother cried reproachfully, “Girl, girl!” But her uncle took her under his protection, and pressed her head against his chest.

“She is as good a girl,” he said, “as any to be found in Ireland. Look,” he said, turning to me, “I shall never forget what she has done for the poor motherless child sleeping on that bed. Four years ago, my wife was laid to rest on Aghadoe hill, and, since then, Bridget has been mother and angel to my poor child. Oh, I shall never forget it! God bless my dear Bridget!” And he pressed the head of the girl, who was kneeling by his side, more closely to his chest, and the tears that fell from his eyes glistened in the flashes of the expiring fire, like night dew amid the raven hair of the “Myrtle of Killarney.”

When we at length separated, the mother told me I was to come again soon and often, if I was not really an Englishman, but a friend of the poor Irish people, and Bridget said, “Yes, I was to do so;” and the hand she offered me in parting lay long and firmly in mine. Midnight had passed when I again reached my solitary chamber. I found but little rest in the blue-curtained bed, which seemed to me a heaven a few hours before. Fiddler Mick, too, never returned to Torc-view. I did not see him more; but, wherever I went and wherever I sat, on the sunny side of the lakes or in the gloom of the glens, I fancied I could hear the wild, broken sounds of his fiddle, like the expiring sighs of a band of spirits; and oft, when I turned round, I saw something like a shadow hovering over the rocks, and disappearing in the gloom of the abyss.

When I passed the cabin the next afternoon, Bridget was sitting on one of those roughly carved stools seen in nearly every Irish cabin. Before her stood a peculiarly shaped spinning-wheel, on which she was spinning wool. The afternoon sun had already illumined the small green

meadow around. The cabin-roof also glistened, and so did the hill, which was densely covered with closely intertwined brushwood. Little Granna was rolling about on the ground. Hearty and cordial was the welcome with which Bridget rose from the wheel, offered me her hand, and begged me to sit down. She brought another three-legged stool from the cabin, which she placed for me near her own. Presently I drew from her the story of her family : it was the old, sad affair—eviction, attempted assassination, and starvation. It was affecting to hear the story of so much suffering and wretchedness and crime from lips so pleasant, so sweet and pure ; but it was nothing new for her to tell, for it was the constant subject of her mother's discourse, and the memory of her dead and her sufferings was the holy silent legacy of her young life.

The sun had descended behind the hill, and the meadow was growing shadowy and cool. Bridget rose and said that it was time to light the fire, and get the supper ready against her mother's return. She carried in the spinning-wheel and the two stools, and when she called Granna, the pretty child sprang up to her neck with a thousand kisses, and was thus carried to the cabin. I followed them : one was a child, and the other not much older than a child, and yet knew how to combine a mother's anxiety with the charm of virgin innocence.

How cozy the cabin looked when the fire was lighted on the hearth, and Bridget stood by it ! Bridget in the red petticoat, Bridget with the black hair, Bridget with the naked feet—the dear little creature, so lovely, so attentive, so innocent ! There was nothing in the cabin but the hearth, the bed on which Bridget and Granna slept—the myrtle and the myrtle-bud—the few chairs, the

spinning-wheel, the potato-keel, and along the back wall the little dresser for plates, jugs, and glasses. Opposite the fireplace, a dark closet, in which the mother's bed stood, was reached through a very low door. The lath-work of the roof, which stood uncovered over the cabin, was coated with the greasy deposit of the many years' peat smoke, and in this black rusty mass I saw here and there a small Maltese cross made of barley straw.

"That is the crussog," said Bridget, "in honour of my patron saint; on St. Bridget's night, the 2nd of February, we weave it and place it on this roof-tree. It protects the house from fire."

Over Bridget's bed was a holy picture, blackened with smoke.

"That is the 'Bridog,' the picture of my saint," she said.

Over the door a double cross was carved in the wood-work, to guard the children from the Evil Eye. On the threshold a donkey's shoe was nailed, to keep the fairies away, and protect the milk from the witches. Inside and close to the door was a sty for pigs and porkers. And what pigs! They grunted the whole day, and shoved their sharp noses through the palings, and felt so happy in the little cabin, that they would not go out of doors, however much Bridget might beat and drive them. By the sty was a straw mat, in which the hens sat, laid eggs, and cackled; and there was a little black chicken which was Bridget's pet, and sat oftener in her lap than on the straw mat. What appeared to me afterwards in the far wild west as the height of human wretchedness, human beings and animals herding together in this way, —seemed to me here wondrously idyllic and original. I did not notice that it was the girl's beauty, which

adorned everything that surrounded her, even the pigsty and the strange hen-house. I loved this land in which so much wretchedness and such poetry—this cabin, in which so much paganism and so much christianity—this girl, in whom so much reverence and such deep superstition, resided together ; and when I think of those days now, amid the reality of war's alarms and armaments—those days so full of sunshine, peace, and tenderness—I feel an unspeakable nostalgia, a deep longing, such as the Irishman suffers from when he stands on the shores of the blue Atlantic, and his eye gazes over the heaving surface in search of the submerged island.

The only window in the cabin was on the left of the door, and it was very small ; had not the sun loved these beings, it would scarce have found its way in. But now it was dark, for the sun must be near its setting, and its departing beams were kept off by the dark wildly-overgrown hill, whose shadow fell on the cabin and its little window. Bridget was terribly frightened of this hill : she said it was the only unpleasant thing about their cabin that the Danish fort stood over it. Often she could not sleep at nights for fear, when she thought about it. Yes, there was such a noise at times round the cabin at midnight, that she looked to her patron saint for protection. She would not set a foot on that hill for all the treasures that lie buried in the Killarney lakes ; “for the little gentlemen,” they say, “live on that hill, and they are very attentive to human footsteps!” The little gentlemen are the fairies, but she rarely called them other than the little gentlemen, or the good people.

“Why do you not give them their real name?” I asked, “as they are called, ‘schifras’ and ‘schiogs.’”

“For God's sake, sir,” Bridget screamed, “don't call

them that, or they will do you a hurt without your knowing whence it comes. Do not call them so—they cannot bear it.”

“Have you ever seen the little gentlemen?”

“God forbid!” the girl replied, in great emotion; “but my mother has seen them, and my aunt was in their country; but I—God forbid!” Little Granna was listening with great attention, and pressed more and more timidly to the side of Bridget, who was stooping over the fire.

“I should like to mount the hill,” I said at length; “there must be a splendid view thence of the setting sun.”

“What will you do?” Bridget screamed, and left fire and caldron to themselves to stop me; “for Heaven’s sake, do not go up that fearful hill. You do not know what you are about. Sit down, sir; don’t go, and I will tell you a story, which I remember very well. It was when we first came to live in this cabin, and I was still a child; but I recollect all that happened perfectly well. The hill is on the property which belongs to Mr. Herbert, the great rich gentleman of the big house close to Muckross Lake. Once a boy of his was ordered to plough the field which lies close to the fort. This field had never been ploughed before, and has lain since that time, too, untouched and overgrown with thick creepers and bushes. The boy made many objections, as he had not the courage to plough the field, for such a thing had never been heard of. He did not dare to stir the plough. Then, the gentleman came himself, and said he could show him what nonsense it was he talked about the fairies. So the gentleman took hold of the plough, and the boy had to drive the horses. But they

hadn't gone two yards when crack something went, and the plough broke. The gentleman sent for another; and this fared like the first—crack! The boy crossed himself repeatedly, and begged his master to give up the attempt—it was all the fairies' doing. But the latter grew vexed, and said it came not from the fairies, but the many roots that grew in the ground. Still, the matter was left for the day; but in the night the row began. Oh! I shudder when I think of that night; for it had scarce struck twelve ere there came such a storm that we feared the roof must be blown off; and in Mr. Herbert's park invisible spirits groaned and shouted fearfully. It rained as if all the fairies had emigrated from the fort to destroy the park and castle. I can remember the night very well; my sister who is in San Francisco. and my sister who is in London, were still at home, and we all slept together in this bed. We all woke up and began crying. The cattle tore themselves loose, and ran about the yard and the park, howling fearfully, and no one ventured out. The next morning, when the storm had gone down and people went out, the fences round the park were broken, and some cows and pigs lay dead in the grass. The second night it was even more terrible, and the gentleman was obliged to send for old Sally of Dunloe, and she went to the fort, and many fair words and promises were needed before the good people would be quieted. They did not come again, but the field round the fort has never been molested since: and now you want to go up that hill. Oh, no, your honour, you will not?"

I said I would not; but the words had scarce passed my lips ere Bridget rushed from the hearth with a loud cry, and Granna ran squealing after her. She had

upset a small pot of milk, or it had fallen over. "Oh!" she screamed, "there's some one in the cabin who begrudges us the milk!—oh, there's some one who wishes us harm!—oh, 'tis your constant chattering about the good people!—you will bring a hurt on us—you——"

It took a long time to calm her.

"If we say anything kind about them, that cannot be unpleasant to them, my dear girl," I asserted.

But the whole night she would say nothing more about the fairies, and it was ever a matter of difficulty to draw from her her stock of stories, which she seemed to keep to herself like a fearful secret.

"If you are so fond of fairy tales," she said at length, "go to Lissyviggin wood; there you will find much larger hills than this one, and the spot is much wilder."

"Yes," I said; "I will go to the wood to-morrow afternoon, and you shall accompany me, Bridget."

"*I?*" she said, in alarm. "*I go to Lissyviggin wood?*"

I took her hand, and gazed into her eye, which was as deep as the Lakes of Killarney, and assuredly as dark as Lissyviggin wood. She said nothing, but looked down on the ground.

"Will you, Bridget?" I asked.

She did not look up, but stammered "yes" in a very low voice, and I alone heard it. I said good-by till the morrow, and kissed little Granna.

The next afternoon arrived, and a pleasanter blue afternoon of autumn I cannot remember, however far I go back. Bridget was seated on a wooden bench before the cabin; it was her usual seat when her work was ended, for she loved the open air; there she often sat, and told me the stories of her people, and sang me its

songs. And when I think of Irish fairies and Irish melodies, I must ever think on Bridget too, sitting on the bench: the red petticoat flutters around her naked feet, shadow and light fall on her white neckerchief as sun and cloud alternate, and round her pretty head, looking proudly and truly aloft, the loose black hair dances in the breeze. Thus she sat there this day, and I cried to her merrily,

“Kunasthin thu?” (How are you?)

“Moch na moh-a-guthe!”—(Thank you, well, and how are you?)—she replied in delight. “How kind it is of you to know how to speak with us in our own language!”

To my shame, I must confess that I knew very little Irish; but that little, produced with much good will, and still more love, made its effect, and accompanied me throughout Ireland, and wherever I employed it I was received, not as a stranger, but as a friend, a guest who had come to this country to delight in its beauty, and show a mournful sympathy for its wretchedness. Bridget wrapped a gay handkerchief round her head, and we began our excursion. Presently we crossed the Flesk, and approached the gloomy wood of Lissyviggin.

As Glendalough is the soil that bears the most important ruins of old Christian buildings in Ireland, so the mountains and glens round Killarney are not less distinguished by the relics of primeval pagan edifices which stand mournfully in their gloomy shadow. Killarney is the country of Druidic reminiscences, of pagan gods converted into fairies; its lakes are full of delicious water sprites and malicious cobolds; the deep waves are filled with elfin music, as the mountains are with echo, that music of the spheres. We hear of no melancholy saint, no

sad tale of despised love, but a magically beautiful knight on a white steed, a woman glowing with love, who follows the fugitive to a watery grave, and over the departing couple the perfumed sky of the first May morning. We hear of no ascetic self-denial, no Christian martyrdom, but all is love, enjoyment, and a happy life in fairy land. There are no stone crosses here, nor ghastly round towers and penitential cells, in which the ivy and nettle quiver and moan ; but Druidic circles, fortified mounds, and hero graves, in which the merry fairies now dance and sing. Mote, Dun, Rath, and Carn, all of which the people call "Danes' forts," mounds of earth on which stood, long before the first invasion of the Danes, the palaces of Irish princes, and the villages of the Irish nation—piles of stones, beneath which they buried their heroes—terraces, on which their bishops sat in judgment—all this, more or less to be recognised, is still found in the land of the lakes ; and at solitary spots in the mountains stands the cromlech, the stone of deity, and the heathen's sacrificial table, and near them the sacred grove, which in the time of the Druids formed a green covert for these consecrated spots.

We left the thick wood presently, and followed the windings of the stream into a narrow dell overgrown with moss and grass. Countless grey stones were scattered over the green soil. Here, Bridget told me, the good people had once held a great battle, and these stones were their missiles. Then the dell opened out, and the prospect grew wider of a valley quite denuded of trees.

"There is the fort," Bridget said, and pointed to a mound like the one that overshadowed her cabin, but even more covered with brushwood and gloomier-looking. Not

a soul was visible, so far as we could see; the lark alone soared above us at an almost invisible height.

“There are many forts about here,” said Bridget, “but that is the most powerful. My aunt was in it. The Lord be merciful to her soul, poor Katy! She was soon to die, and sad was the parting from little Granna, whom she still bore on her bosom, and from Jack Lowney, whom she loved dearly. One night—she had been married about two years—when she was quietly lying in bed with her husband and child, she was carried away by the good people. She could never say how far she was taken, but it must have been a couple of miles or so. Then they came to a fine house, and she woke again. At first she entered a room full of very handsome young men, the handsomest she had ever seen; then she went into a room full of equally lovely maidens. In a third room were none but old men, in a fourth only old women. One of these old women she recognised; she saluted her.

“‘Oh,’ the old crone said, ‘how do you come here, Katy?’

“Then Katy told her all she knew.

“‘Now I’ll tell you something,’ the old woman spoke; ‘eat nothing there is on the tables—no poultry or fruit—nothing, nothing. A handsome youth will come and ask you to eat; but do you say you are not hungry.’

“All happened as the old woman stated. A very handsome youth came, though he did not invite her to eat, but, in the most polite way in the world, to follow him. She did so, and they entered a hall, far handsomer and more splendid than the four she had already passed through. In this hall sat the fairy king on this throne, and by his side the fairy queen, a most lovely but sad lady, and on

her lap a child of about nine or ten months, which looked very miserable, and pining from hunger.

“ ‘Dear Katy,’ the fairy queen said, with a sad smile and in a gentle voice, ‘will you lay this child on your breast and let it suck, else it must die.’

“Katy thought of her own little Granna, who was about the same age; and when she heard the poor little yellow thing whining so, she could not endure it longer for compassion, but bared her breast and let the elfin child suck. When it was satisfied, and again lay on its mother’s lap, the fairy king said that Katy must now go and strengthen herself with meat and drink, and at a sign from him the handsome youth stepped forward with splendid dishes, and presented them to her. But then Katy, remembering the old woman’s words, said she wanted for nothing, and suddenly all disappeared—the throne, the king, the queen, the splendid hall. Katy was again borne through the air to her own bed, where she soon lay by her husband’s side, trembling and shivering with cold and fear.

“ ‘Where have you been?’ asked Jack Lowney, who had long missed her, and sought her in vain.

“ ‘I have been in fairyland,’ Katy answered, with teeth rattling, and told him the whole story. After that, when she put her child to her breast at the proper time, it turned away and would not suck; and the following day, and whenever Katy tried it, the child refused to take the breast. It had to be fed with bread-and-milk, but the blood went to the poor mother’s head, and though old Sally of Dunloe did all she could, in less than a fortnight Katy was a corpse.”

With such stories we had reached the open valley, and a small mound that rises on it. This mound was once regarded as marvellously sacred by the Druids, and close

under the top are the remains of their sacrificing place, the Stonehenge of Lissyviggin. It is composed of seven short stone pillars, enclosing a circle about fourteen feet in circumference. This inner circle—the holy of holies of the Druidic temple—is surrounded by a still visible earth-wall, the eastern and western entrances being indicated by a stone pillar.

When we returned to the high road, we saw not far from us, under the trees, a human form slowly crawling along by the side of the ditch. I recognised it at once, and said to Bridget, “Is not that sick Larry?”

“By the Virgin! you are right,” the girl answered; “but how do you know that?”

I told her how I first met him in Aghadoe churchyard, and what I heard from old Sally; but that neither she nor Thady would tell me what was really the matter with him.

“People do not like to talk about it,” Bridget replied, “and I should not tell you if you had not opened my mouth in some wonderful way. But don’t walk so quick, but keep back so that the poor lad may not hear it, for it would hurt him afresh. In the Aghadoe churchyard is a ghost which appears to persons whose relations are buried there. When a funeral takes place, it waits till all have gone away; but it has a magic power over the last person that leaves the churchyard. According as this is a man or woman, the ghost of Aghadoe takes the form of a lovely girl or boy, and fills the last person with a mad love, and gets the promise that he or she will return at a fixed time. This promise is sealed by a kiss, which has the seed of death in it; and the poor people have scarce left the churchyard, ere the story of the ghost occurs to them; they sink into a wretched brooding, they

grow sick and must die, and at the time when the meeting was arranged, the corpse is buried at the same spot where it received the deadly kiss. And thus it fared with poor Larry. With the exception of his great-grandfather, he is the last of his family. His father died many, many years ago; his brothers are dead, his sisters are dead, and when he lately followed his mother to the grave, the ghost of Aghadoe met him—he declared that it was the loveliest girl he ever saw. It came over the hills in long white garments and raised him slowly and lovingly from his mother's grave, where he lay weeping, when all the rest had left.

“‘Larry,’ she said, in an enchanting voice, ‘weep no longer. You have lost the last person who loved you on this earth. You are all, all alone in this wide world, and I will console you. Come, Larry, weep no longer!’

“He threw himself in her arms with a sudden outburst of love, laid his head on her bosom, and then kissed her, and promised to return when the yellow flowers had faded. And then the lovely being disappeared, and when he had got outside the terrible fact struck him like a blow that he had kissed the spirit of Aghadoe, and must die when the yellow flowers fade.”

By this time we had reached the sick lad; he was sitting on a milestone, and drawing breath deeply and painfully.

“How are you, my boy?” Bridget said, in an exquisitely soft voice, and laid her round arm on his shoulder.

“Oh, Bridget,” he replied, in a voice difficult to understand—“oh, my kind Bridget, I am no better. The yellow flowers are beginning to wither.”

Bridget said, as she let her head droop,

“Larry, you will see them bloom again, if it please

God: pray to Him that He may let you see them once more. And how happy we shall all be when they bloom again! But you are so far from the village; how will you get back, as you have no one to help you? Why are you alone?"

"I had no one to go with me," Larry said, in a scarce audible voice; "no one, so far as heaven extends; you know it."

Bridget looked imploringly at me, and I understood her glance. I gave her and the sick lad my hand on parting, and while I went homewards, Bridget walked down the valley to the village with Larry hanging on her arm.

I often looked back into the twilight in which the two forms were slowly disappearing, and thought the while how strange is the lot of the wanderer in foreign lands! As if he had not enough of wretchedness to witness at home, he must go beyond the sea to seek men and incidents which painfully afflict his heart anew, and after he has drunk the cup of misery to the dregs, he returns home and confesses to himself, at last, that this little world of ours is wretched enough, in which some live without hope, others without reflection, and all without satisfaction.

CHAPTER IX.

THADY THE DRIVER—THE GOOD PEOPLE ON THEIR TRAVELS—THE CAVE OF DUNLOE—KILLARNEY TOWN—MR. HERBERT'S PARK—MUCKROSS ABBEY — M'CARTHY MORE — GLENA BAY — THE MUTHERIN ROE — INNISFALLEN—THE HERMIT—ROSS ISLAND—O'DONOGHUE'S CASTLE—SINKING GROUND—THE WAKE—ULLALUH—FAREWELL TO KILLARNEY—THE FUNERAL.

WITH such gloomy thoughts I fell asleep that evening; and I should assuredly not have waked with a smile next morning, had it not been Thady the driver who awoke me. He roused me from my sleep with his cheerful smiling greeting, and, Heaven be thanked, that laughing is far more infectious than yawning. After he had recovered from his first fit of merriment, he informed me that the car was all ready at the door, and it was a fine bright morning, and we should have a splendid drive. Gradually, I remembered that I had told him the previous night that I intended to make an excursion, and I was pleased that Thady would give my thoughts another bias. Banson the boots, the man who was engaged in the most saddening of all earthly existences—for a boot which knows nothing more of the terrestrial pilgrimage than the infertile dust, is surely a sad thing—Banson, I say, did his duty; and so did Michaulin; and finally,

when I was seated in the car, Biddy displayed her pleasant face, and smiled among the blue curtains, like the sun in the blue morning sky. The morning was wondrously fresh and reviving; I felt as if born again beneath its breath, and when I flew past Bridget's cabin, I thought on her, and wished she had been standing in the doorway to accept my greeting. But she was not there; and valley and hill and cabin had soon disappeared from sight.

As the road was good, the air pleasantly cooled by the breeze, and the horse did its duty, Thady was very satisfied, called his steed "Madam," and only laughed when I asked him a question. Ere long, we turned into a cross-road, which ran narrow and stony through tall hedges. All at once a cloud of dust blew in our faces. Our good steed made a false step, and the shaft cracked; but Thady, instead of seizing his whip, let go the reins, crossed himself, took off his hat, and cried, "Pleasant journey to you, gentlemen!"

I was frightened, for I fancied that our car was on the verge of a bottomless abyss, and Thady's cry was in some metaphysical relation to the breaking of the shaft. Fortunately, so soon as the whirlwind had passed, the dark meaning of his speech was cleared up.

"What was that?" I asked.

Thady answered—and this was one of the few answers in which he did not laugh, but spoke very solemnly and hesitatingly—

"The good people have just passed."

"How—where?" I asked.

He pointed with his whip to a glen into which the wind blew the dust-cloud towards the sun, which illuminated it magically.

"There!" he said—"there!" For it is the popular

belief that the little gentlemen move from one place to the other in these cloudy vehicles.

After this, Thady took up his reins again, called his horse "Madam," then "Sir," then "Miss," struck it, and off our car flew. No one met us after these ghost-like travellers on the solitary cross-road, and after a glorious drive we reached a forest glade, with a slightly curved surface. It belongs to Mr. Mahony, and is renowned by all scholars, savants, and travellers in Ireland, for the Cave of Dunloe is beneath this meadow. Thady fastened "Madam" to a tree in the hedge, while we clambered over it, and walked across a stubble-field.

At the end we discovered some labourers, busied in cutting the aftermath. After a lengthened capitulation, and the most hearty promises to pay them for their trouble, they consented to let us pass, and even produced some torches, which they lighted with lucifers; the senior of the mowers walked in front, while the others—true Irishmen, glad of any opportunity to interrupt their work—sat down smoking on the crumbling stone steps that lead to the cave.

The cave is not deep under the surface, but it is so low that we were obliged to creep in and remain on our knees when inside. And there we sat in a death treasury of old Ireland, surrounded by primeval secrets, by languages now dumb, by gloomy uncanny walls, on whose rough surfaces our own shadows danced like ghosts by the flickering light of the torches, while over our heads the grass grew and waved, as it will do some day over our grave—who knows when. This cave was discovered in 1838 by some labourers. The walls are lined with rough stones, and a central pillar supports the roof. These pillars,

as well as some of the ceiling-stones, are covered with Ogham characters, so that it is supposed the inscriptions were carved before the stones were placed in their present position. In the passage were several human skulls and bones, which proved that this old Irish edifice was a vault.

No one has yet been able to read the inscriptions, and I will not trouble the reader with my attempts. My heart beats to this day when I think of them; for it calls to mind the impatience of the guide, as I crawled about amid the dust and stones of the Cave of Dunloe. Heaven knows that I should not have left them for a long time, had not the man continually asserted that the torches would soon go out. All at once they did so, and we sat in the cave, with only Thady's glimmering pipe to serve us as a beacon. We found the way out, and breathed the air of day with new satisfaction. It was twelve o'clock by this time, and "Madam" had quite rested; she had indulged her appetite on the green hedge, careless whether it grew on a Christian or a pagan grave, and produced such destruction, that the mower declared we must pay something for it. We did so, and did not repent it, for "Madam" was in the best temper when we started again, and I only remember one occasion on which Thady had to employ the warning word, "Sir!"

We drove about the whole afternoon, and at length passed through Lord Kenmare's splendid property. All was in festive excitement and motion: garlands were being woven, and windows and doors adorned with flowers. The young nobleman was expected, for he had just married, and intended to pass the honeymoon on the lakes. I was compelled to think of the solitary gentleman at

Lord Brandon's cottage, and how much pleasanter it must be to enjoy a honeymoon on the blessed lakes, than photograph trees and flowers.

It was growing dark when we reached the town of Killarney on our homeward journey. I bade Thady stop, and got down, for the fun was at high tide here. Most affecting was the warm moonlit night in the midst of rags, ruined cabins, poverty, and wretchedness. Street life here has something essentially southern about it, and the merriment is like that of the lazzaroni. I could have easily imagined myself in some little dirty provincial town of distant Italy. The guides, after the day's toil and scanty wage, were standing like beggars who had done their work, in crowds, smoking their bad tobacco and talking their bad Irish. The women, wrapped in their cloaks, bounded over the ill-paved streets; half-grown lads sat on the walls of the ruins by the wayside, uncanny forms in the gloom that prevailed in these desolate spots; and the moon had just risen over the projecting gables.

As I walked along I heard the sound of a fiddle at a short distance. I recognised the sounds: they were of that wild, sad, spectral nature, which I shall never forget. I followed them, and at length came to a row of eight ruined cabins deserted by the owners, Heaven knows how long. On the trampled grass-plot in front of them was a dense circle of boys and girls, and, in the centre, a jig was being danced. The musician was sitting in the moss-grown window-hole of a cabin; he sat there in the uncertain light peculiar to the moonlight in the shadow, and played; and his heart was broken, as his tune was, and had snapped like one of his fiddle-strings, and I could not help looking at him, poor Fiddler Mick, and thinking of Bridget.

At this moment a heavy hand was laid on my shoulder. I started, but I was delighted, on turning, to find it was Jack Lowney. He had returned that afternoon from his mountain trip. He told me he had already been up to his sister's, and found Granna well and happy as he had left her, and that Bridget was as good and lovely as an angel. Then we arranged an excursion together for the next day, and Jack promised to come and fetch me.

The morning was breaking through the clouds when we walked down the hill together. This time we did not pass Mr. Herbert's gates; they were wide open, as when I first saw them, and hospitably received my guide and myself. We walked under green nestling avenues of beeches to a glade in which the ruins of Muckross Abbey are hidden. I walked through a Gothic gateway, picturesquely covered with ivy, and the ivy whispered, and the wind sang its primeval songs, and the bees buzzed from flower to flower, from grave to grave. They were tall graves, here covered with ivy, there surrounded by laurels. The Irish laurel does not garland the victor's brow, but only tombs. Here another grave: a rose is swaying on a tall stem, "the last rose of summer:" and my guide begged me not to pluck it. I could not have found the heart to do so.

But, *vogue la galère!* we are on Muckross Lake, happy Jack and myself, seated in a four-oared boat, and we fly with the morning breeze and morning sun over the rippling waves. When I think of that morning, and that lake, and that hour, I hear again "The last Rose of Summer" as I heard it then; the melody is gently re-echoed by the darkly foliaged shores, the forest glades lie in the golden autumn shimmer, and the woods behind us alternate in sun and shade, and the mountains smoke like altars. Then I think on the words of the Psalmist:

“The heavens declare the glory of God, and the firmament showeth His handiwork; day unto day uttereth speech, and night unto night showeth knowledge. There is no speech and no language where their voice is not heard.”

From the open glade, Mr. Herbert's white stone mansion looks down on the lakes. The echo, full and soft, is returned by the woods, and the lake lies there, of a blackish green, surrounded by its ever changing shores. Jack has laid aside his bugle, and is singing a song in honour of St. Patrick, and the boatmen join in chorus. When all is quiet again, Jack Lowney begins the story of Torc Lake :

“There was a diamond pillar, once upon a time, in the lake, deeply buried in it, and it only appeared at times by night. Then it looked as if the whole sky were afire, and the air was like bright day. There are old people who have seen this pillar. It rose from the centre, and was entirely covered with diamonds and gold and silver. At length an Englishman came who had heard of this column, and waited every night till it was pleased to show itself. And when it rose one night he went and took it away with him to England, where he is said to have become the richest man.”

Jack Lowney is silent; he is thinking of the Englishman who robbed them of the glorious column and became so rich a man, while they remained beggars. In the mean while we have run into a rocky bay. Dark holes stare at us, firs rustle round the rocks, and over them stand the myrtles in the full sun glare. The rocks stand here on pillars—not of diamonds, though, but limestone pillars gnawed by wind and storm—between which the water runs in and out with wondrous passages and wind-

ings. A water palace stands before us: there are halls, and arches, and chambers; here is a rock, with long marks and scars, where M'Carthy More learnt swimming. Now we pull among the rocks, we lie in the water palace, under us the wave, above us the jagged white rock stucco-work. We are in M'Carthy More's wine-cellar. Jack blows the bugle, the echo sounds hollow from rock to rock, and to the accompaniment of the spectral thunder the whisky-bottle passes from hand to hand. Before us lies the lake, flashing in the sun, and behind it stand the green forest-clad hills. We leave the water palace to its solitude, and, see! a grey eagle is flying over the pines. There stands a rock: it is M'Carthy More's eagle. Over the stone eagle soars another eagle, a living one, and after it rises another; higher and higher mounts the first—the other still follows it, till both are lost in the mist over the valley. We pull round a bold frowning rock: it is M'Carthy More's Head. He is the hero of Torc Lake, as Coleman the Giant is of the upper lake—the M'Carthy More, whose ancestors were kings of Munster, and whose last descendant died a beggar in Spain. Now an eagle returns; white as a star it sails over the green pines majestically, and is at length lost in the mountains.

We landed in Glena Bay: Jack and I leaped merrily ashore, while the men fastened the boat. Under a myrtle-tree, close to the water, sat a blind old man playing the bag-pipes.

"Huzzah, Dan!" Jack shouted to him. "Old boy! Jolly, Dan, eh?"

"Is that you, Jack?" the bagpiper asked, as he stopped playing and turned his head.

"Poor Dan!" Jack whispered to me, "he has been dark almost from his birth, and for a long time has not

seen how lovely it is on the Killarney lakes. But he is the best bagpipe player in Munster, and if you ask for Dan O'Leary, every child will tell you he sits under the myrtle of Glena. Here, Dan, is a guest and a friend of old Ireland, God bless him! So now play him, 'Mutherin Roe.'"

And Dan commenced "the Chase of the Red Fox," which Jack accompanied by song, recitation, and declamation. He blew the bugle to imitate the hunting signal, and the wood of Glena re-echoed it with a startling sound. He barked like a whole pack of dogs. He gave one view-hallo after another, and Dan squeezed out such a volume of sound that the woods groaned again. At length the fox was dead, and Jack began a jig, as a dance of victory over its corpse. He put his arms in his sides, and tripped so perseveringly that the boatmen, who had laid themselves down on the grass to rest, sprang up and danced too, with a shout of "Well done, Jack!" The blind piper at length, when unable to blow longer, said, very sadly, "Oh, Jack, if I could only see you dance!" Then the dancers lay down again, produced whisky and pipes, and talked and laughed, and were very jolly, while I walked slowly along the strand.

Most exquisite is this bay, with the forest hill that encloses it, looking down on the blue water that dreams at its feet, overshadowed by myrtles. And the most exquisite thing in the scenery, where all seems so exquisite, is a cabin which a Lady Kenmare had built here. If love ever sought a refuge, if peace or longing, if everything that is too lovely to endure the broad sunshine of the highway, sought a refuge, would that it might select this cottage on Glena Bay! The thatch roof rests on ivied pillars; a view of the interior is obtained through the

wide windows of a boudoir, which is quiet, and shady, and rich, as if it were the home of the Queen of Love ; I noticed a large golden mirror, which reflected all that lay behind me, lake, mountain, myrtle-wood, and sky. Boat after boat swam over the calm lake ; sunshine and song filled the bay ; the bagpipe sounded in the distance, and the little waves plashed gently on the grassy shores of Glenna Bay.

Then I heard from the other side, from the forest depths, the notes of a bugle, towards which I proceeded. In a glen, high above the lake, I found my boatmen and Jack, who had pulled over while I had been gazing in Lady Kenmare's magic mirror. They were dining on cold mutton and barley bread, and felt doubly disposed for jollity after this refreshment. Our boat was speedily launched, and to the accompaniment of merry songs we soon entered Lough Leane, the third and largest of the three Killarney lakes.

Under trees drooping sadly over the water lay Ross Island, and Innisfallen in the distance. Ere long I landed on the latter : it is now a lovely, luxuriant wilderness, with hillocks on which the briar and the linden wave, with graves on which grows the evergreen ; but it was once a blooming garden, with shady monastery and pious monks, one of the sanctuaries of the Irish nation, renowned for its splendour and glory, which have passed away, and for the melancholy recollections that remain. The ruins of the abbey are now scattered over the ground, and it was at once sad and sweet to wander through them on this exquisite island. I never saw the forest growing so gloriously over ruins. Trees of surpassing size and splendour arch over the wayfarer, his foot is often impeded by luxuriant creepers, and the

evergreen water-plants hang down majestically into the lake. This island is a glistening forest in the centre of the water : separated from the rest of the world, it lies there, with its gloom and its legends, with its evergreens and its monastic ruins, like an aquatic flower on the surface of the mysterious lake ; and it would excite no surprise if it one day sank in the depths, only to appear at times to straying boatmen and love-sick girls.

I noticed here an old and venerable man, dressed in yellow breeches and a blue waistcoat. Snow-white hair covered his head ; the lustre of his eyes had long died out ; a lengthened acquaintance with earthly sufferings and solitude dwelt on his furrowed face. He was a strange-looking object, and if I had been told he had arisen from the grave near which I was lying on the grass, I should have believed it. I asked Jack who he was.

“We call him the Hermit of Innisfallen. He is a very old man, and buried his wife and children and grandchildren long ago. He has one great-grandson left, but he will soon die : it is Larry, the sick boy of Aghadoe.”

I thought of the morning when I looked down from the churchyard and the old round tower, and saw “sweet Innisfallen” for the first time.

“As long as I can remember,” Jack continued, “the hermit has lived on this island, as its sole inhabitant. He was placed here by Lord Kenmare in charge, and I believe has only quitted it to hear a mass or be present at the funeral of his family. In summer he has no lack of visitors, but in winter, when the lake is rough, a boat does not come for weeks, and once he did not see a human face for three whole months.”

Ross Island does not possess the dreamy charm of

Innisfallen : it belongs more to life and the living. It is covered with forest growth down to the water's edge ; firs, oaks, and willows form at several spots picturesque groups. The night was setting in, and the dark trees waved peacefully over our heads. Cypresses moved in the night breeze ; while between them stood the arbutus, that tall, graceful bush, with its glistening evergreen leaves.

We went past a pleasant forester's house, Jack still by my side. The roof rests on green leafy pillars, and red roses form the base. Behind, in the shadow, are the windows. Oh, who could not pass his life in this pleasant shadow—dream, slumber behind this foliage and these roses ! In the bay opposite lay many happy beings on the ground, and children were playing on the hill-side with a large and faithful-looking dog. The cup went the round, songs were sung, and the last red glow of evening lit up the scene. One of the young men rose, held his glass aloft in the golden twilight, and said aloud, while the pretty girl at his feet looked up at him laughingly, “ May the recollection of this hour never fade out of our future life ! May that future life bring us many an hour in which we are so happy as to-day, and feel as we do here on the happy Lakes of Killarney ! ” Then he drank, gave the rest to his girl, and bent down to kiss her.

Presently we reached the extremity of the island, and the castle stood before us. But at its foot droned the bagpipes—that long-drawn strange melody which arouses longing and a feeling for the North and the Highlands. Oh, those never-to-be-forgotten melodies, which cannot leave the man who has once heard them,—melodies as monotonous as the Irish moors, and yet as sweet and lovely as the Irish girls. At the foot of the tower danced the boatmen of Killarney, the idle guides, the arbutus-

girls, and behind them stood O'Donoghue's Castle, all clothed in ivy. It is a perfect building of ivy, in which not a stone, not a sign of human handiwork is visible. The old apartments are still pointed out: this was once the great hall of the knight of the lake. The marble chimney still stands there, sharply cut and in good preservation. In the centre of the hall a tree has grown out of the ground. The windows look out on the lake: that is the window from which the knight once sprang down; this the one through which he enters the castle of his fathers every first May morning. All around was in ruins: the stairs that led up, the battlements on which we stood, and the castle into which we looked down. The tree rose up to us from the great hall, and its crown waved gently. The entire building is surrendered to ruin and the fairy world. Beneath us nothing but ivy, and from the top of the parapet the blood-red foxglove nodded at us, while beneath us lay in the blood-red sunset the placid lakes—Lough Leane and Innisfallen, that solitary paradise, and Torc Lake, with its rocks, its islets, its forests, and its mountains.

At this moment the silence was interrupted by merry voices and the approach of a lively party. They were the people who had been singing in the bay opposite the forester's house. The charm was broken, and I went down again to the boat, which pushed off into the saddening mist. The rocks that lay scattered around us were barren, and only covered by a thin layer of moss. But they were all gigantic forms, which the approaching night rendered all the more fantastic. Here, the Elephant Island, a heavy black mass, resting on four stone pilasters; there, another reminiscence of Donoghue—his treasury, which rose frowningly from the waters. We

approached the shore: swans were standing on a sand-bank—spectral white visions in the heaving grey of the night. The night fell deeper and deeper, the mist settled over the mountains, which sank from sight, and our boat moved slowly over sand and pebbles.

As we landed, Jack Lowney said: "Within two hundred years people will row over the steeple of Killarney as we have this day done over the lakes. The town will sink, and from Aghadoe to Torc all will be under water. Where we now stand there will be no land."

Thrice in my life I had thus stood on sinking ground. I can remember the boatmen of Heligoland telling me that their rock island would sink into the sea, as the path to the sand-hills had done long ago. It was sorrowful to see them sitting on the iron paling at Falm, gazing out at the sand-hills—a white strip in the blue ocean, looking like foam, and mayhap not much more solid. I can remember walking across the sands of Wangeroge, and the people were so sad when they told how every storm tide washed away fresh ground. They showed me the water barrier from the lighthouse to the graveyard, and told me that all would be over when the sea rose above it. Five years have since passed away, the barrier is surmounted, the sea has risen over it, and Wangeroge is a sunken island. The living went away with tears, and the dead rest deep beneath on the ocean bed. The third time it was near the Kentish coast, and on the Goodwin Sands, the churchyard of ships, as the Deal boatman called it; and he was sad too, as he told me, that this had once been a glorious spot, on which the great Earl Godwin had resided, but all had sunk now for eighteen hundred years, and every ship must perish which approached these dangerous banks on stormy nights.

I never felt more sad than I did now, when Jack told me that Killarney must perish too. I saw in the night that surrounded me a sinking people and a sinking country.

After so many days, which were rich in sun and rich in fog, in the soft whisper of the waves and moonlight, in storm, rain, and gloomy nights, an evening at length arrived which will never be forgotten. I had made up my mind to leave Killarney; my traps were packed, and Biddy had pulled back for the last time the blue curtains to which I had been so long accustomed. I walked to the door, when I suddenly heard on the hill-path, usually so still, the sound of many steps and the noise of voices. I hurried towards the sound, and soon saw a crowd coming down the hill, enlarged at every cabin by new comers. I asked a peasant whither they were going? "We are going to the village, sir," he replied, "to Larry's wake." The yellow flowers had faded away; the sick boy of Aghadoe had died, as old Sally had prophesied. I saw the crowd pass by like a black cloud through the murky night, while I went towards Bridget's cabin. The door was leaned to, as on the first night I visited it; the fire was glistening, and in its light sat Bridget in the red petticoat. Near her, on the bed, slumbered little Granna. An open letter was lying in her lap, and she was singing the song I had heard once before, which I ever hear when I think of Bridget and Killarney.

The song died away slowly in the autumn night: then all was silent, and the wind could be heard whistling through the trees and shaking down the withered leaves. Presently Bridget told me that she had made up her mind to emigrate and join her uncle in America. She

had received the letter that day, and next spring she would be gone.

Reader, if ever you go to the Lakes of Killarney, you will find all as I have described it to you, with overflowing heart, and often with overflowing eyes, but never in sufficient beauty. But the cabin on the fairy hill will stand empty and deserted, one more ruin in the land of ruins, overgrown with nettles and thorns, a sorry sight ; and if you ask, Where is Bridget ? you will learn she is no longer there.

"Come," she said, after a long pause, "I hear mother's step ; we can now go to Larry's wake."

The mother came in, seated herself on the bed, and we walked silently through the darkness for nearly a mile. Close to Killarney, on the side of Aghadoe hill, stands a solitary cabin. We could see the windows glistening while we were some distance off.

"That is the house of death," Bridget said.

A confused sound, like that of an approaching train, met our ears as we approached. At one moment it sounded like one voice, then like the lamentation of many. Then all was quiet for a while, and laughing and fiddling and merry songs followed in turn, till the fearful song began again, which I could now plainly distinguish as the "caoine," or Irish death-song. The melody is extremely ancient, and was sung, so it is said, by a chorus of invisible spirits over a royal grave, and has since been repeated at every death-bed. Formerly it was the duty of the bards to sing it, but since they have died out, it has fallen into the hands of the women. The custom is, however, decaying, and is only kept up in the southern mountains and the desolate western coast-range. Even there the custom is not observed with all deaths, for, as

Bridget told me, only "strong farmers" or old families hear the wailing for the dead : the former pay the women for their trouble ; for the latter—as in Ireland an old family means being beggared—the crooners do it for nothing. This was the case with Larry, whose cabin we had now reached.

We walked in, Bridget in front. When I think of the first impression, I have nothing before me save a dense cloud of tobacco-smoke, countless candles—which diffused more heat than light, a great heap of people—who over-filled the little room, laughing, singing, yelling—and the shrill sound of a fiddle, which suddenly broke off as we entered. Then I noticed that a window was hurriedly thrown up, and some one leaped out. The boys and girls stood around in the strangest positions. Some with head and body bent forward, held their hands flat on their back ; others stood with widely opened mouths gazing at me, and I saw a girl striking at everybody with a leathern thong. The draught through the open window produced a slight movement in the thick layer of smoke, the candles flickered, and all appeared to be floating before me as in a dream. Bridget had knelt down on the threshold and said a paternoster : then she rose with a greeting, responded to from all sides with a "Cead mille feailte." I seemed to have entered a strange unknown world, in which Bridget was the only familiar object. She led me to the corner of a table, against which I leaned, and slowly, as my eyes grew accustomed to the strange gloom, and the still stranger candles, which seemed to dance around me like Will-o'-the-wisps, I noticed the things around me.

Close to me on the table lay Larry's corpse. A white

sheet, which one of the maidens present had ornamented with a white ribbon, was spread over it; and a handful of salt was scattered over the part under which the heart was. The rest of the table round the corpse was covered with bottles, glasses, and dishes, in which lay tobacco-pipes and cakes. At least a hundred small candles were flaring, some on the table, others on the window and on the hearth, for every visitor to the wake is bound to bring a candle.

The noise which our entrance has interrupted now commenced again.

"Oh," shouted a man, whom I at once recognised as one of my boatmen, "what have you done with Fiddler Mick?"

"He has jumped out of window," others shouted.

"Ho, Fiddler Mick! Fiddler Mick!" the lads cried from the window—but no answer was returned—"we can't get on without music; some one sing a song," the boys said.

"I will give you music," Happy Jack shouted, thrusting the feet of the corpse slightly aside to make room on the table, and he began imitating the sound of a bugle.

"I will give you music too," a voice said, which I immediately recognised—it was the man with the four notes, the man with the mighty breast-pin—Sir Patrick, the Knight of Dunloe.

It was as if all my friends were assembled round me on this my last night, and all were merry, I must say; had not the corpse been close to me, I should have fancied I was at a wedding.

"A splendid wake," said Sir Patrick, as he passed me—"a splendid wake; as jolly a one as I can remem-

ber, your honour." Then he seated himself by Jack's side, and began imitating the key-bugle ; for on such an occasion as this there could be no thought of rivalry.

The boys and girls had again become quiet, but after the tune was ended, they began once more, laughing, yelling, kissing, and fighting, and a species of game, which I at first imagined was some old pagan mourning ceremony, but proved to be something like our blindman's buff. On the other side of the table sat old Sally of Dunloe on a three-legged stool. With her narrow yellow face, and the red handkerchief she had pulled deep over her long grey hair, with her thin bony arms, and long spider-like fingers, she resembled a sybil seated on her tripod. Round her sat or stood six other women, in long cloaks, who were Sally's suite, and evidenced the most profound respect for her. Sally leant her head on her brown hand, in the other she had a blackened clay pipe, from which she took tremendous pulls every now and then. The other women, too, were smoking.

Not far from them, in a corner, sat a very aged man. His withered hands were folded on his yellow breeches, his head, covered with snow-white hair, had sunk down on his blue waistcoat with the yellow buttons. He never moved. The Hermit of Innisfallen had fallen asleep ; he had survived wife, children, grandchildren, and had now come across from his island to be present at the wake of the last of his family.

When all became quiet, old Sally rose. She laid her pipe on the stool, and drew the red handkerchief tighter round her head. Then she began whining, and it was a peculiarly heart-rending tone she produced. The other women also wrapped themselves more closely in their cloaks, and drew nearer to Sally. She raised her long

yellow arms high above her head, so that the sleeves of her gown fell back, her hands were stretched out in the air like claws, her hair fluttered under the torn kerchief, and as she stood there with distorted face and widely open mouth, she uttered a frightfully shrill yell, in which the other crooners, and then the whole company, joined: "Ulla-luh!—ulla-luh!" Then came a deep pause, as when the storm is silent for a moment; then again the ulla-luh, and at last the caoine, the death-song, which Sally, turning to the corpse, now began. I shall never forget the awful song. There were only a few notes regularly repeated, to which Sally adapted the words she muttered—monotonous melancholy notes, in which the other crooners joined.

"Ulla-luh!—ulla-luh!—oh!" screamed Sally, and all the rest yelled too. And those who had been just now laughing and kissing so merrily, sat there sobbing and crying, as if carrying their dearest friend to the grave. I could see from the wild sounds of complaint and woe that they were not feigned, but really came from the heart; and again I was forced to admire the nature of this people, who can pass at a bound from the loudest delight to the deepest consciousness of painful desolation, and to whom fate gave in addition to the unspeakable wretchedness it reserved for them the most enviable levity, which in an hour forgets all that has happened, and all that may happen.

Sally began her wail in the following words:

"Oh, why did you die, Larry? so good, so young, so brave. You, the last descendant of your family, why did you go before your great-grandfather? Why have you left the land of the green grass, over which you once bounded like a mountain roe, before you were ill, where

you often conquered the other boys in fighting and hurly playing, and where, before you kissed the churchyard fairy, blushing girls and old men awaited you with the prize?"

"Ulla-luh!—ulla-luh!—oh!"

"Oh, why did you die, Larry? You, the bosom friend of young Paudheen O'More, who here weeps over your corpse, the favourite of Bridget, the Myrtle of Killarney, who sits here on the ground and mourns for you? Why did you, the descendant of a princely race, leave your house without posterity, you, the son of parents who died long ago, the brother of seven sisters who were buried before you—why, oh pride of the whole village and of the barony?"

"Ulla-luh!—ulla-luh!—oh!"

"Oh, why did you die, when the potato harvest is awaiting you, and a little potheen, which we obtained with sorrow and care, was nodding to you promisingly, in order to glorify your marriage and warm the hearts of your neighbours?"

"Ulla-luh!—ulla-luh!—oh!"

"Oh, why did you die, without leaving a widow to lament with us? Did we not all love you truly, and were not your wants properly provided for? Why did you not wait to bring up grandchildren under your lowly roof, and close your grandfather's eyes?"

"Ulla-luh!—ulla-luh!—oh! why did you die?"

I could stand it no longer, but rushed from the cabin.

The next morning broke cool and fresh: a lovely melancholy autumn morning. The hills were steaming, the glens were shimmering, heavy clouds chased across the sky, and the east was clear. My last glance was directed to the lakes. Torc Lake was still bathed in fog, but

Lough Leane glistened with silver. I shall never pass more glorious days than I did here: when I think of them, I often feel as if it were all a dream, surviving from the blessed time that preceded my earthly pilgrimage.

Then came Banson the boots, and placed for the last time the shining proofs of his official zeal in the accustomed spot.

"May the road, which these boots have still to walk upon the blessed soil of Ireland, be smooth and prosperous," he said, as he mirrored his face sadly on the polished surface.

Michaulin the waiter was a gentleman; he had put on, in honour of my departure, a stiff clean shirt-collar, whose points would have endangered the life of any one who came too near them.

"I hope," he said, "that the noble gentleman has been so well satisfied at Torc-view, that he will return, before we can miss him. Any one who has been at the lakes of Killarney, is sure to come again. Such salmon as are caught in our rivers the entire world cannot produce, nor such sheep as graze on our mountains. Don't forget the lakes, don't forget the mountains, nor the salmon, nor the sheep of Killarney!"

I promised not to forget them, whereon he served me my last breakfast with great dignity. In the mean while Thady had entered the yard with his car and his "Madam."

"Oh, Madam!" I heard him say several times, "oh Madam, he is going away to-day; we shall never trot with him again through the glens as we have so often done—oh, Madam!"

When I went out and asked him if all was ready, he

made an attempt to laugh, but it failed. He nodded his head and smoothed his horse's mane and said,

"Oh, Madam! all is ready."

At last Mr. Hurley made his appearance to say good-bye to me, and we started down the hill along the familiar road.

When we neared the bottom, a wild inarticulate howl reached us.

"Those are the people carrying poor Larry to the grave," Thady said.

So soon as we turned the corner, we saw the procession moving slowly along the road. Four men bore the coffin on their shoulders, and many people of both sexes followed it with wild ulla-luhs, and loud crying, and when a wayfarer met them, he joined the procession, and I even saw the labourers in the neighbouring fields running up to howl and lament with the others. In front of the procession a girl carried willow twigs adorned with artistically cut paper, and another a stick, from which hung paper gloves. Thady told me these things were laid on every fresh grave. Then he asked my leave to pay the deceased the last honour by the "three steps of pity." He got down, took the three steps behind the mourning party, and joined noisily in the ulla-luhs. Then he returned to his place and whipped-up his horse with a grin, when I asked him if we should not reach the station too late.

Rain and rainbow do not follow each other more rapidly in Ireland's sky, than tears and laughter in the Irishman's eye. When I thought of the Aghadoe Golgotha, to which poor Larry was now being borne, What a contrast it offered with the lamenting procession! The Welshman does not know the death complaint; but

the place where he deposits his dead is his greatest sanctuary; the Welsh churchyards may be called the gardens of death. Evergreens and shrubs adorn every grave; at Easter, Whitsuntide and Christmas, the tombstones are washed, and on Palm Sunday, wild roses, narcissuses and rosemary are planted, or, as it is there called, "the dead are dressed." The Irishman, on the other hand, after venting his grief in an ulla-luh, leaves the bones of his dead to bleach in the air, and throws their skulls about the churchyard.

Thus we reached the Killarney station, and there was the same confusion there as is usual at such places. A few ladies, with servants behind them; some disagreeable commercial gents with their sample-cases under their arm; a few honest "Philistines" with large sticks, and faces as if they were going to the end of the world. I did not see one of my good Killarney friends, as they had all gone to the funeral; only Thady remained faithful to me, but presently Happy Jack hurried down from the churchyard to bid me good-by.

"Little Granna would so gladly have come with me to press your hand once more, but Bridget—God bless and preserve her!—would not let the child leave her."

Round one of the carriages a group of Irish peasants had collected with sad, tear-swollen faces. Two girls from the valley sat in the carriage; they were going to Cork, and thence emigrate to America. Three women and a man were standing at the carriage-door; a second man, who held a whip in his hand, had turned away. At first they cried loudly and sobbed; but the bagmen, coarse fellows in fashionable coats, burst out laughing. Then the women hid themselves behind boards leant against the wall, and began yelling and lamenting in a

heart-rending fashion. It was the Irish wail I had before heard; the lament Sally had raised over Larry's corpse; with their cloaks pulled tightly round their heads, the three women howled, as if the two girls sitting in the carriage, and who were probably their daughters and granddaughters, were already dead, and the train that was to bear them away was the hearse taking them to the grave. The man with the whip still turned away, he wiped his eyes and leant his head against the wall. The other man stood silent, and when the bell rang for starting—the passing bell for the departing—the women stood there, bending half forward, and they clasped their hands and uttered a loud howl—a frightful howl of pain, which was lost in the snorting and puffing of the engine that bore us away. That was the parting from Killarney—mine and theirs.

“Oh, God!” I thought to myself, after pressing Jack and Thady's hands for the last time, and forgetting my sorrow in theirs, “has not this happy, lovely, most blessed of all valleys, room enough for two poor, bare-footed girls? Why must they quit the mountains, which they love with a feeling beyond our comprehension.

The Irish have become the strangers and slaves in their own country. The English govern the land, and the Irish serve in it—some still gnashing their teeth, others having grown dulled long ago; but the majority of them still feel the yoke, although they know, and we know only too well, that their kingdom is destroyed, and can never be established again. The English possess the land, and the Irish must till it. The English live in palaces, and the Irish in mud-hovels. The English wear silks and satins, and the Irish, rags. The Irish tug at the oar with blistered hands, and blow the horn and sing

their melancholy songs, and speak old Irish, and lament and yell; and the English—oh, I shall never forget the bagmen at Killarney station—laugh at them.

Slowly, very slowly, as the train at first moved, my thoughts also became calmer. In the distance the solitary cabin was visible, in which Larry had lived and died. It stood more desolate than ever, in the fresh sunshine and cool of the morning, which were sporting with every home and every heart. At the open window sat a form, so far as I could distinguish in the distance, playing the fiddle, and from the sad wild strains that reached my ear as the train passed, it must be Fiddler Mick who was the present occupier of the deserted cabin. My heart, too, beat more tranquilly, and as the engine tugged at the train, and we flew along in the sunlight—when the brown moors were again reached, which on this side extend close up to the paradise of Killarney, the sound of the wheels arranged itself to a melody I knew. It was Moore's song of Innisfallen, which had accompanied me as I entered the paradise I was now quitting.

“Sweet Innisfallen, fare thee well,
May calm and sunshine long be thine,
How fair thou art, let others tell,
While but to feel how fair, be mine.

“Sweet Innisfallen, long shall dwell
In memory's dream that sunny smile,
Which o'er thee on that evening fell,
When first I saw thy fairy isle.”

CHAPTER X.

MALLOW—AN IRISH PRIEST—THE NATIVE LANGUAGE—LIMERICK—
ENGLISH TOWN—IRISH TOWN—STREET LIFE—LIMERICK GLOVES—
POPULAR BALLADS—CAHILL AND MALONE—THE HAYMARKET—
NEWTOWN PERRY—THE CASTLE—THE CORPORAL—SARSFIELD—THE
WHISKY STORE—OUR FRIENDS THE FRENCH—THE ARTICLES OF THE
TREATY—IRISH BRAVERY—THE ENGLISH RECRUITING SERGEANT—
GOD SAVE THE QUEEN!

It was not till I reached Mallow that I awoke out of a state which was neither dreaming nor waking. My eyes had not long been closed, but I was not asleep. Suddenly the train stopped with a concussion, and I returned from the dreamy middle world to the realities of life. They seemed to me prosaic enough: men passed up and down the station: the atmosphere was wet and cold, and all felt uncomfortable. Trucks were dragged over the damp stone pavement, boxes and bundles were thrown about, porters shouted, and the signal bells were ringing shrilly. Mallow station is one of the largest and busiest in the country, for the trains meet here going from north to south, and from east to west. I had considerable trouble in finding mine, and when I had found it I was not particularly edified. The transition from the civilisation of the east and the poetic fullness of the south, was

at once perceptible here. I crossed the frontier line as I entered the new carriage: it was narrower, the seats were poorer, the windows lower. I noticed that there would soon be an end of all to which the comfort of life has accustomed us, and without any prospect of finding compensation for it, I leant in the hard corner of the carriage.

I was not alone: two Catholic clergymen, of middle age, and well fed, had sat down by my side after a polite bow. The corner seat was occupied by a recruiting sergeant, who troubled himself but little about the black dress coat and bands of the clergymen. He was an Englishman and a Protestant, and did not deign to look at the Papists. He whistled an English song, took off his cap, and arranged the flaunting ribbons fastened in it. A young man then walked up to the carriage and looked in, bowing deeply when he noticed the priests.

"God save you, Father M'Cloghan," he said, "and all of you."

The priest sitting opposite me waved his hand as if in blessing, and said kindly, "Come in!" The young man turned round, and at once a blooming fresh-looking woman stepped into the carriage, with a hood over her head, which she threw back as she entered.

"God save all here!" she said, and bent her blooming head with the black eyes and black hair, to the priests.

"Hallo!" Father M'Cloghan's priestly neighbour said to the former, as he turned to him with a laugh, "don't you know that an old canon forbids a monk travelling in the same vehicle with a maiden?"

"Reverend brother, you are well aware that I am not a monk, but a priest," the padre replied, good-humouredly "and that the young lady there is no maid, she knows, at

any rate, and so does that young scamp, her husband, for I married them myself in St. Mary's Church a week ago."

The pretty young woman blushed deeply, and her husband, who, according to Irish notions, was a "gentleman," though he had a hole in his breeches, and another in his coat, spread his very ragged cotamore over the wooden bench, to make her a softer seat, and we did not sit long ere the whistle sounded, and we went out into the flat, wretched-looking country. Father M'Cloghan at once unbuttoned his coat, and took in his hand a large book, which had hitherto lain on the bench, and thus, as he sat before me, leaning on his oaken stick, engaged with the book, with his bright eye and long white hair, he certainly presented a very reverend picture. I looked at him with pleasure, for in spite of the worldly remark just now, which had driven the blood into the young woman's cheeks, there were mildness and clerical dignity about him, and, indeed, I everywhere noticed gladly that the Irish clergy are zealously devoted to that which seems to them the only true and God-commanded course; that they display the kindness of a father toward the nation, with which a persecuted religion, deeply insulted nationality, and a martyrdom transmitted from generation to generation, have closely connected them: and that their modesty and habits are most pure and most severe, in spite of their close sympathy with the general wretchedness, as well as the general joy. I often travelled with Irish priests in the most various parts of the country, but I never saw the housekeeper and the straw basket, with wine and pastry at bottom, and vulgate and missal at top, which are their constant travelling companions in Belgium and France.

Father M'Cloghan must have noticed with what sym-

pathy I regarded him—in fact, I did not grow weary of studying the intellectual head under the paling hair, and reading the talented face with the pouting lips, while he perused his book. After finishing his task, he looked up, and as he met my glance he handed me the book, with the question whether I knew it? It was an Irish hymn-book, and I read a few verses aloud, and, as the passage was at once familiar to me, gave their meaning in English. All looked at me with joyous surprise, for they heard by my accent that I was neither an Englishman nor an Irishman.

Father M'Cloghan asked me: "To what nation do you belong, sir?"

"I am a German," I replied.

"Then you are a countryman of Humboldt?"

This word from his lips surprised me, as if it had suddenly come from other worlds.

"Do you know that name?" I asked quickly, and somewhat incredulously.

"I know it," the priest answered. "I am aware that he does not belong to our Holy Church, but the man who, for the glory of God, investigated His marvellous works, and who, after attaining a point where human wisdom, even the highest, ceases and miracles commence, renders us even more confident in our faith—such a man deserves that the servants of the true Church should love him, even if they pity him for not belonging to it."

This an Irish priest said on the road from Mallow to Limerick, at the time when the Rector of Innspruck University interdicted the reading of Humboldt's "Cosmos" as irreligious.

"Reverend Father," I began, after a pause, "as I see,

your parishioners still pray in Irish ; is it the language of the peasant and the common man in these parts ? ”

“ Would it were,” the father replied, with a sigh. “ To tell you honestly, our language is only a sadly crippled fragment, which is dying out, and in its decadence is more a curse than a blessing to us. We have entire districts, especially towards the west, where the people, living on wild mountains and in fishing cabins on the flat sea-coast, regard English as the language of the nobles, the strangers, the detested oppressors ; they neither speak nor understand it. We have other districts about here, from the Kerry Mountains to the mouth of the Shannon, in which the people understand just sufficient English to visit the markets and appear before the magistrate, but they revert to their native language so soon as they return to their huts, or kneel before the altar in prayer. Hence arises the peculiarity that in one village the inhabitants do not understand a consecutive sentence of English, while in another, not one hundred yards off, only the old people talk Irish fluently. And while there is not a single school left in which Irish is taught, the priest in this country is compelled to preach in Irish here, in English there, and on the same Sunday to say mass in both languages. Thus, for instance, I am obliged to preach in English in one of the Limerick churches, and in Irish at the village of Kilkrie, which is only a few miles distant. You are aware, sir—for I see with pleasure that you have come here not as an enemy of our country and nation, and not unacquainted with both—you are aware what means have been employed against us and our language for centuries, and how cruelty on one side, and wretched dissension on the other, have together waged war against us. The middle and upper classes aped only too readily

the manners of the English settlers, and the language of their fathers became troublesome, even odious to them, because it was the mark of the despised race; and our youths, if they longed to leave their native ravines and go out into the world, must first unlearn the words they had acquired at their mothers' breast, because they were an obstacle to their progress. The village schoolmaster, whom the English landlord appointed and could dismiss when he thought proper, has striven for many a long year to suppress the use of the native language among the people, and introduced a perfect system of spydom, by which the children of one village were made witnesses against those of another who used an Irish expression: hence the very imperfect knowledge the rising generation possess of the language, which is the sole medium of communication between their parents. The poor peasant is aware that the only hope for his children is in the English language, and while his heart bleeds to see the beloved language of his fathers thus sinking into oblivion, he must forbid its use, because it would be an obstacle to learning the other. This state of transition was, and is still, a very serious impediment in the interchange of feeling and ideas between the parents and children of the same household. I myself," Father M'Cloghan said, with a very earnest shake of the head, "have often seen a painfully comical confusion produced in the cabins of my parish when the parents, who scarce understood a word of English, gave themselves trouble to speak with their children, who, through fear of the parental prohibition and the village schoolmaster's cane, were forced to employ a language their parents did not understand, and of which themselves possessed much too small a *copia verborum* to say one-tenth of what they wished to say. It

is otherwise in the north and east, and partly in the south of Ireland; there the English language has driven ours out of the field, and no struggle checks the mental development, of which the former has become the means. And it must be so with us, ere the seed of a new and better era can spring up. But we stand in the thick of the fight still; and hence, while lamenting the decadence of the Irish language, we are forced to hurry it on, whereby we have not even the melancholy pleasure of seeing how firmly the nation cleaves to the last thing left it from our national past."

"Would it not be possible to revive the Irish language, by making it the means of popular education in a literary sense?" I asked his reverence.

"It is impossible," he replied; "the Irish language has a new future before it as the language of science, but none as the language of a people. Reflect what the fate of a language must be which has long ceased to be that of the educated, and whose existence was left in the hands of people who had no idea of rules, and had never heard of grammar. In consequence of centuries of neglect, there arose an indescribable irregularity and arbitrariness in the orthography, and while the language has been considerably enlarged in its words and forms, it is still written as it was four hundred years back. This naturally renders the common man averse from writing Irish, and the peasant, even if he knows the letters, cannot read them. Hence there is no really living literature, and we have no means of educating the man who only speaks Irish, because he cannot read it. There are no Gaelic newspapers: there were never any in Ireland or Scotland, so far as I know; but we have heard of Irish papers in America, the new and better home for so many of our

nation, the true and real Ireland of our days. As for books, there are only the catechism and hymn-book, which the peasant learns to read with the greatest trouble and difficulty."

I might here have objected to his reverence, that an Irish translation of the Bible would probably be the most effectual means of reviving the decaying language; but by this objection I should only have brought him into a fresh conflict between his Catholic faith and his national feelings, so I held my tongue.

He, however, concluded with the words: "We must pull down, so that those who come after us may build up again. It is not the first time that the Irishman has laid hands on his best treasures. The mighty Hugh Roe, the Prince of Donegal, destroyed the castle of his fathers that the enemy might not convert it into an instrument to oppress his own nation, but 'he wept as he destroyed it,' as the old ballad says which the bard sang over its ruins."

Father M'Cloghan was silent, and we were all silent, and the train rolled over the metals, and the English recruiting-sergeant whistled, and the gay ribbons on his cap fluttered in the breeze that went souging across the plain. But the constant rolling, and the silence generally prevailing, produced a soporific effect. The pretty young woman had laid her head on her husband's shoulder, and was sweetly slumbering; he, too, was nodding his head, and only opened his eyes now and then, and ever more rarely, to revel in the sight of his pretty companion. The English sergeant and one of the priests made a slumbering alliance, which, awake, they would not have ratified: they were leaning against each other, and, thus mutually supported, continued their slumber most happily, free as

it was from all prejudices. Father M'Cloghan, who had talked himself tired, folded his hands on his stick and laid his head upon them, so that his long white hair fell down like a silver veil. I looked out of the window at the heath, over which, like a ghostly procession, the steam-cloud of the engine was rolling. We travelled thus for a long time; then a mass of houses appeared on the horizon, over which a quadrangular tower rose.

Presently the train stopped—the crush of the carriages woke the sleepers—we were in Limerick station, and each prepared to start. The English sergeant was the first out; the society had plainly not been to his taste, and the concessions which his sleepy head had made to the Papist priest evidently grieved him. The young husband went off with his wife after deep bows to the clergymen; and the latter, with the missals under their arms, parted from us with a hearty shake of the hand. The one of them who had hitherto said but little to me, recommended to me at the last moment a “small, cheap” inn, where I should be at home with “pious people.” I thanked him for his kind advice, but was libertine enough not to follow it; on the contrary, I resolved to lodge with my Protestant CRUISE, whose hotel my green friend, “the Picturesque Tourist,” recommended as “one of the best in Ireland.” Consequently, I mounted a car and rattled off towards the town.

The impression produced on the stranger by the “city of the violated treaty” is in no way satisfactory. The eye, the further you go west, must grow accustomed to the inhospitable baldness, the cold monotony of life. The houses become less pretentious, the life quieter. The people themselves appear more serious, and in the depth of their dark eyes dwells an old, innate sorrow.

That portion of the city near the railway has certainly an English aspect, but it is comprised in English names and English externals. The interior is sorrowful and desolate, and knows nothing of the features and comfort of English life; and I felt this more perceptibly, because the morning fog had sunk coldly, and clothed in grey the colourless monotony of the first appearance. Thus, I reached my inn, and it was a perfect Colossus of a building, displaying on its broad forehead, in golden letters, the name, "Cruise's Royal Hotel." The royal glory sank considerably, however, so soon as I entered it and climbed up a labyrinth of steps. It is in such towns that the social degradation of this country is most painfully felt. You see here that the struggle between the two elements is far from being exhausted, and that the peace has only been externally patched up, not internally. The English pretence contradicts the Irish nature, and nowhere did this contradiction strike me so fully as in Limerick. On gazing at the glistening gold letters and mighty front of my hotel, what expectations were aroused! but inside everything was as badly managed as possible, uncomfortable and disagreeable. The tall windows had not been cleaned for an eternity. Dust lay on the torn velvet of the furniture, the damask beds were disgustingly filthy, while silver teapots and cups with broken handles, knives with the points missing, and bent forks, formed the service. The perfect indifference and want of sympathy for everything that makes existence not only endurable, but pleasant, rose before the new arrival at every step, and produced a depressing effect upon him. I did not feel so desolate in the most gloomy shebeen-houses of the farthest west. There it was my free choice to share whisky and oatmeal with the most

unhappy and poorest portion of the poor people; and their stories and songs spiced the meal and made the scene full of painfulness and poesy; but here, wedged in between pretension and insufficiency, between the white chokers of the waiters and the dirty chairs and tables, a great fear fell upon me.

Hence, I went out into the open air. The street that was before me is called George-street. It is the main street of the city, broad, massive, not without some degree of grandeur, but at the same time so naked, so bare, so cold! Hereafter a warmer life will fill these streets, and happier faces will look down from the windows. The Ireland of the future rises before me, and I do not complain because I have it in my power only to present a picture of its sad present, which is, however, rich in the seeds of development. I looked at things without prejudice, I am striving to drown the voice of my heart as I write, and I hope for the time when my happier successor, on comparing the description of the German wayfarer with reality, can exclaim, "It is better now!"

The Shannon, "the king of Irish streams," flows majestically below the city, and one of its arms, the Salmon river, divides it into two very distinct parts, the Irish city and the English city. I have never seen two harsher contrasts. What I had observed of the English city was not very refreshing, but it was a paradise when compared with what I was fated to see. I was about to survey at one glance the utter corruption, filth, and rottenness of Irish life. It was Saturday afternoon, and the Irish town was full of marketers of the lower classes. The main and business street, Irish Town Ward, full of people and costermongers, sent to meet me the

hoarse cries and the indescribable stench which the lowest misery is wont to produce. The houses that stand here are filthy dens, on whose ground floors are shops for the sale of the most disgusting articles of food. Herring tubs, covered with a dirty brine, are put up at the doors, slices of rusty bacon are spread out on shelves, greasy dishes with pig's-fry and trotters stand near them, fusty hare-skins and goose-wings hang around. Donkey-carts occupy the centre of the street, and half-naked men surround them. The ground floor of nearly all the houses is occupied by clothes-dealers; every third house is a pawnbroker's; and, as if poverty extended even to the smallest details, while this noble guild of money-dealers usually display their trade by three golden balls, here only one is hung out. And what articles are seen under it! Coats whose sleeves scarce hang by a thread, uniforms which whole generations of soldiers seemed to have worn, slit up trousers, boots without soles, caps full of filth, sheets full of vermin. And then, too, the customers who buy these wares—men with crushed hats and ragged tail-coats, women with faces never washed and hair never combed. The street is crowded with frightful objects; the whole wretchedness of humanity has collected here in its most shudder-arousing specimens, and becomes more terrible through the dirt and every possible sign of neglect which it displays. Here a man without legs, walking on his hands; there a woman crawling across the street on hands and knees, like an animal. In a doorway sat two bagpipers playing in turns. A band of ragged fellows were collected and listening to the well-known strains; but no one sang to the melodies, which died away mournfully in the gloom of the arch; and where I stood with the rest, an old

woman standing behind a herring-tub sprinkled me with the unsavoury brine. I have no doubt she took me for an Englishman.

On a stone close by sat a man who had taken off his boots, and by him on a low wooden stool a cobbler, who was mending them. Every ten paces in the open street, a cobbler could be seen in full work, and round him on the ground were the "brogues," those peculiar shoes of the Irish peasants, fastened by leather bands over the feet like sandals. This trade has come out of the houses into the open air; hence it gives the aspect of southern life, which, however, formed a very wretched contrast with the damp fog with which the stones were dripping, and the frozen, miserable forms in the street. Nevertheless, all were immensely busy with their trade, and I was stopped at least a hundred times. There were girls who offered me "the celebrated Limerick lace," and boys who insisted on selling me waist-belts. A woman came too, who offered me a freshly-caught salmon, a small ocean monster in its way. She followed me through several streets with her basket and her yells. At last I turned round, half laughing, half vexed:

"What shall I do with your fish?"

"I don't know," the woman said, "but I thought you might be able to use it."

Limerick lace, Limerick salmon, and Limerick gloves, are the three great articles of this city, especially the gloves; they have a reputation through the whole of Ireland, and Mr. O'Gallagher, in the celebrated song that bears his name, knows no better comparison for his girl than,

Oh ! what a dainty fair thing is the girl that I love,
She fits my finger as neat as a Limerick glove.

Gloves, however, were not to be met with on the Saturday market of Irish Town; they are only carried about in the better class streets of English Town, where the things you catch hold of are a trifle cleaner. On the other hand, crowds of boys went about offering yards of songs for sale. Here is the market for street ballads; here is the people that buys and passionately loves them. I do not know whether they sing these songs—I fancy not; but not a peasant returns from market to his mud cabin, without adding a new leaf to the others that occupy a place by his hymn-book and catechism. A very considerable trade is done in these productions of the street music; a class of men live in the towns by writing, printing, and selling them; and it is affecting to see how this people, while sinking in the great current of English predominance, strives to cling to the extreme branch of that tree, whose splendid crown in past times was its pride and glory.

The ballad boys were not choked off by the conversation I held with the fishwoman; and thanks to their zeal, I took home with me a perfect collection of the popular songs of the day as a reminiscence of Limerick market. They are all printed on large dirty yellow sheets, and in their external appearance, do not deny their origin or their purpose. They bear in one corner the name of the printer; but the poet is nowhere mentioned. In another corner, remarks such as these may be read: "Country dealers, please notice that S. B. Goggin, the printer, is continually supplied with a perfect collection of pictures and ballads, which are all produced under his own supervision." This remark may produce a smile, but it may make the reader very sad too. It is evident from it, that the poetical wants of the people have remained as

they were; but it is, perhaps, a new sign of its misery, though no reproach to it, that these wants can be satisfied machine-wise. As regards the "pictures" which Mr. Goggin recommends, they mostly represent the male and female saints, of whom Ireland possesses several thousands, and which form the sole ornament of Irish cabins. The father, the mother, and each of the children, have their special patron saint fastened on the clay wall, or over the poor straw bed, and which is renewed at regular intervals. The rest of the pictures are of a very inartistic nature, and it is rare to find a street ballad which is not adorned with one or more specimens. There you see the "True Lover's Complaint," with the picture of an elephant above it; over the "Fall of the Petticoat," a bitter satire on the ladies in the English quarter, sits an ape; while the "Bonny Labouring Man" is honoured with a donkey.

I was most struck with the party ballads. It is notorious that the great mass of the Irish people know only two parties: one consists of Catholics, patriots, and the shamefully oppressed; the other of Protestants, Orangemen, unjust landowners, and oppressors generally. The ballad is naturally on the side of the former party, and it is the predominant mode in which its hatred and passion find a vent. The Protestant street ballad, if it may be called so, has a proportionately small territory in Ulster and the North of Leinster. The party songs of my collection belong exclusively to the Catholic patriotic tendency; and one of the most factious among them is that of "Cahill and Malone." About Malone I was unable to obtain any information; but Cahill is a restless Catholic priest, who became popular in Ireland through several violent political newspaper articles, and emigrated to

America a few years ago; but so long as he was in Ireland, was never tired of preaching, reading, and writing, that there was not a man, woman, or child in France, who would not, when a favourable opportunity arose, dance with joy to stick a knife into an Englishman's body. The song begins with an open challenge to rebellion; presently it goes on to urge an uprising against the Protestant heretics, in order to protect the Church of Rome; then it mentions that Cromwell's bands "butchered, hanged, killed, roasted, and burned alive" thirteen hundred Irish priests; that the "hellish band of King William" raged against the Romans night and day with gallows and axe; and under "bloody Anne" all the convents were abolished, all the monks killed.

But enough. Hatred, fury, and revolt cannot be more clearly expressed; and it would be inexplicable that the English government allows the sale of such writings in the public market, if it were not perfectly well aware what value to place on the hatred, fury, and revolt of the Irish people. Its cry of pain is a cry of impotence, which dies out without producing any effect; its moan for help is of a traditional nature, and bears no consequences for the present. The English government has nothing more to fear from the abject, sunken Irish people; and the little outbreaks and night murders are things which belong to the assize court, and do not come before the political forum.

Thus I reached the Haymarket, which forms the frontier between the Irish and the old English town. The English settlers had a passion for adorning the mud cabins and impassable streets of Ireland with pleasant names of home. But where is the proud frontage of the London Haymarket? where the stately doorway and

arcades? where the throng, so noble by day, so frivolous by night? There is nothing of all this; it is a large desolate court, covered by a wooden roof resting on wooden pillars. The glory of Ireland rests on wooden pillars, the end of which has already rotted away in the boggy soil. In the entire space, scarce anything was to be seen save old clothes, which, hung out for sale, fluttered in the breeze; the other principal article was butter-milk, which was brought in large tubs in donkey carts, and drunk by the thirsty souls out of huge tin cups. In the old English town—for there is also a new one—Newton Perry, in which the fashionable world of Limerick reside in a few neat houses, and of which we have already had a specimen in Cruise's Royal Hotel, things do not look much better than in the Irish town. Here you find a whole street full of old clothes shops, and in the cellars the same stench, the same collection of dirty men and dirty goods. Even on the quays which run along the Salmon and Shannon rivers, the fresh breeze from the water and the neighbouring ocean cannot quite overcome the wretched smell of rags. In the main street there is an impenetrable medley of cobblers, donkey-carts, wretched men, herring-casks, low women, dirty children, and clothes shops. The side streets are gloomy and silent. I saw nothing of the venerable houses with gabled roofs which Macaulay describes in such elegant language; I did not find that "the aspect of the streets is such, that the traveller who walks through them can imagine that he is in Normandy or Flanders." On the contrary, with the sole exception of George-street, I did not see a house within the banlieue of Limerick in which the roof was not fallen in or the door broken, or at least a few panes of glass smashed. I remember walking through a large

house in which only the walls were standing, the window holes could still be distinguished, and a few rags of paper still hung from the walls; and not only here, but also in Newton Perry, the pride of Limerick, I saw entire rows of ruins; even in the centre of the broadest part of the Shannon, where there was no road or bridge, two large crumbling houses stood, without roof or window. Whence this frightful mass of old clothes shops in all the streets, these roofless ruins in the stream of busy life? I do not know. It is as if the people in Ireland built "ruins" as we do houses; and carry rags and filth to market instead of the clothing of our workshops.

According to the plan I had by me, I was in the vicinity of the celebrated Limerick Castle, but could not find it in consequence of the confusion around me. I asked for it: few knew it; they looked at me with amazement, and let me go my way. Only when I asked for the barracks, could they direct me, so fully does this people seem to forget its past history! Their dissatisfaction no longer knows the historic grounds; they have grown sufficiently accustomed to the changes of modern living, and their fury is that of obstinate, unreasoning children. They do not know what they want, and have only a dark feeling that there are two parties, of whom the English are the oppressors, the Irish the oppressed.

Against the walls of the castle barracks have been built and occupied by militia and pensioners. An old corporal, in a red coat, and with a nose of the same hue, was sitting on a post in the doorway, and smoking his pipe. He must have been occupied with important thoughts, for he did not move till I stood close by his side.

"Eh, comrade!" I said, "will you be my guide?"

He looked up slowly, and arose still more slowly ; it seemed difficult for him to leave his seat on the post. He was Irish by birth, and spoke wretched bad English with difficulty. He had gone through the war of liberation on the Continent, and had fought under Wellington in the Peninsula and the Netherlands.

“ Wellington was a brave man,” he said ; “ God bless his memory ! He was born on Irish soil ; he knew the Irish and loved them.”

After this exclamation, in which he had poured out his whole heart before me, we began our march, and it was memorable ground on which we walked, step by step. In this castle Sarsfield’s army held out faithful to the last man, after the king had long been faithless and fled to St. Germain. The old corporal knew more of these buried stories than I had at first supposed.

“ Come,” he said, after noticing the interest I took in them, “ I will show you the towers.”

The castle dates from the time of King John ; six hundred years full of wild struggles and useless treaties have passed over it. Patriots of every age are buried in its walls, and the blood of many noble hearts on either side has dyed the ground on which it stands. At first a castle of the English tyrants, it became at a later date a fortress of the Irish rebels ; then its ruined walls and blown-up towers were restored and turned against their former occupiers ; and now, when the cross flag of St. George flutters calmly over it, it looks down gloomily on the “ king of rivers”—alas, another king without a crown, like the other kings of Ireland who dwell in the mud-hovels of the west—and awaits the time when a new dawn will play round its grey stone brow.

At present nearly the whole of the castle lies in ruins,

and a pile of stones slopes down to the water. The affection and openness of the old red-coat seemed to grow with every tower I clambered up ; and at last, when I expressed a desire to climb up the ruins by the water, he offered me his shoulder joyfully as a ladder, and pressed my hand affectionately when I returned to the fragment of wall where he awaited me. From this spot we surveyed the water, the bridge, and the other bank. There stood the tents of the Irish cavalry ; there their little wild horses were tethered ; there their camp-fires burned ; a few suburban houses and gardens now cover the ground. Ginkell, the Dutch commander of William's besieging army, resolved to break the communication between Sarsfield's beleaguered army in the castle, and the horsemen on the Clare bank. The attack was made and the cavalry fled in wild disorder ; the bridge fort was attacked and speedily stormed ; the garrison fled towards the city. But through fear of the pursuing English the gates had been blocked up. Many of the Irish leaped head foremost into the river and perished in it. Others cried for mercy, and waved their handkerchiefs as a sign of surrender. But the victors were mad with fury ; their cruelty could not be immediately checked, and prisoners were not made until the pile of corpses rose above the parapets.

"That is the bridge," the old corporal said, pointing to a stately arch over the water ; "the old wooden bridge was pulled down and a stone one built in its place. But I can remember the old one well enough, and shall not forget the barbarity of the English which is connected with its memory."

Through the red English coat the Irish heart of the old soldier burst for the first time, and he no longer

attempted to hide it, though he was still cautious. We walked across Thomond Bridge. On the other side, not far from the last arch, on the right, is a large black stone deep sunk in the ground. Time has gnawed at its edges, and it has been rent by the rain of ages. But the upper surface can still be distinctly traced, which covers the whole like the top of a table.

“That is the treaty stone,” the corporal said.

I stopped to draw its outline in my note-book. A few steps further on is M'Donald's whisky store, a small thoroughly Irish house, in which there is usually a very decent row going on. M'Donald is a zealous patriot, and the patriots collect at his house and drink his whisky and curse the Englishmen within his four walls, where no one overhears them.

M'Donald was standing on the threshold while I stopped by the stone. The corporal went up to him, and I was invited to step in. The room was small, and many men with heated faces were seated on casks and benches, and the host's neat little wife stood behind the bar. She came forward to salute me.

“Take the strange gentleman up-stairs,” M'Donald said, as he gave the corporal a glass of strong whisky.

The woman went first and I followed her up a small narrow flight of stairs: then we walked into a lighter room, which looked like a palace compared with the lower one.

“Here, dear sir,” she said, “you can read it;” and she pointed to a large glass frame on a table. It contained the articles of the treaty of Limerick. I was bending over it when M'Donald came in and said, “We will go down and read it,” and he took the articles down stairs, where we followed him. His customers, the men with the

heated faces, with the corporal at the head, who had already drunk more than one glass of whisky to my health, and at my expense, collected round the landlord and listened as he read the articles, one after the other, with considerable pathos. When I asked him presently what connexion there was between the articles and the stone, he replied: "These articles were subscribed on that stone, and the Englishman broke this article, and this one," and he pointed to the first, third, and seventh.

"He broke them all, he did not keep one!" a man with a large brown beard shouted, a perfect Hercules, rather decently dressed, and possessed of some slight degree of education. "You want to know," he said, as he leaned against the wall, "what that stone means. It is an eternal monument of English faithlessness and Irish bravery."

An old man with grey hair, but cunning look, and who was held in great respect by his comrades, said that he hated the English and loved the French, and that the French and the Irish were brothers in faith and in blood, and that the French would come to free them from their misery. "And when they come," he concluded, "they shall have the best salmon in the Shannon, and the best whisky from M'Donald's cellar; and, as you are a Frenchman, O'Leary of Limerick bids you welcome, and hands you his glass to drink with him to the welfare of Ireland."

I did not dare refuse, but I certainly felt uncomfortable, for the atmosphere was stiflingly oppressive, and the spirit-inflamed tempers of the whisky drinkers were beginning to grow dangerous.

"Bravo! and when the French come, I will stand by their side against the English," shouted the little corporal

in her Majesty's coat, with a sudden outburst. "Hurrah! I am no worse Irishman than the rest of you, and I drink with you all to the health of our country and our people!"

"There will be bloody work yet in Ireland," a very aged man said, who was cowering in a corner on a low stool. His eye had the cold lustre of age, and his voice, as he raised it, had something prophetically deep in it, which moved me. "Bloody work," he repeated, "and battles upon battles. A woman will stand on the highest mound in the land for three days and not see a single man; the cows will stand there, and no one will milk them; the harvest will be lost, for there will be no one to save it; and the spirits of the murdered will walk through the land in bright day. At the end, the last battle will be fought on the banks of the Loughail, which is called the 'lake of sorrow.' A mill will be turned for three days with the blood of the killed, until the army of Ireland shall have driven the foreigners into the lake, where the last of them will be drowned."

At this moment, when M'Donald, interrupting the deadly silence which followed these words, had walked to one of the casks to fill the corporal's glass again, the door opened and an old acquaintance walked in—the recruiting sergeant of the morning. His English face was red with cold, and the gay ribbons in his cap, damp with fog and rain, hung down in a bundle. But he was not alone; he was followed by four or five young fellows in torn coats, who had taken the Queen's shilling. Some coloured ribbons were fastened on their shoulders too. All was silent when the new party entered: the Herculean man, and the cunning-looking man, and the corporal, crept into the corner round the prophet, and looked as if

they had not spoken for a week. But the recruiting officer was all the more loud: "Hallo! whisky here for my lads," he shouted, almost before he entered; "whisky here for her Majesty's light brigade! And he is a villain who doesn't join in when I say 'God save the Queen!'"

The lads did not reflect long; they looked as if they had not eaten anything for some time or drunk for much longer. They swallowed the glass of whisky, and devoured the rolls handed them, and shouted, with their mouths full, between the bites, "God save the Queen!" The others, however were silent.

"Why do you sit there so mumchance?" the sergeant said, turning round impudently. "And you, corporal there, why don't you shout when we drink the health of our most gracious Queen?"

"My good sir," the corporal said, whose pipe had gone out in his fright, "my glass is empty, and——"

"And you wish her Majesty's servant to fill it? Very well: in the Queen's name, fill his glass."

M'Donald, whose face, during the whole scene, had been gloomy, walked to a cask and filled; but he did not say a word. The sergeant, with his fellows and the corporal, collected and hob-and-nobbed, till the cry of "God save the Queen!" echoed through the same room which had a few moments before been the witness of the enthusiasm for Ireland's freedom and Ireland's faith. A new row, exactly opposite to that which had greeted me, commenced. The new guests sat down noisily in the seats of the former guests, who disappeared silently one after the other, and the Limerick articles were quietly carried up-stairs again. I went too, and the corporal

with me. But he walked behind me silently and with drooping head; he evidently felt as he would after a defeat, and for a long time did not dare look at me or address me. And thus, undisturbed by this man, who walked after me like the pitiable destiny of Ireland herself, I proceeded along the banks of the rushing Shannon.

I had taken another glance at the fermenting heart of the people, and it had not been satisfactory. English faithlessness and Irish "bravery" had fought a new battle in my presence, and its result had not edified me. I had been taken once again for a Frenchman, and as the representative of the "great nation," fresh proofs of the most passionate sympathy had been given to it. They cling to the illusion of help from France with the whole strength of despair. Not only here, but everywhere in Ireland, the same impotent hatred for England, the same childish preference for France, which is to them ever pre-eminently the land in which their rightful rulers the Stuarts, and the little band of faithful men who followed them, lived as martyrs and died as saints. They have a species of enthusiastic veneration for this land, which, as I heard in various quarters, is fostered by the priesthood. With the tenacity of temper, which always produces fresh illusions when the old ones are destroyed, they hold on firmly to the hope of French help, and do not let it go; help from that France, which was of no use to the oppressed the first time she came to their assistance, and even injured them the second time, as the French squadron, under General Hoche, came too soon in 1796; the other, under General Humbert, in 1798, came too late; and when France was appealed to for the third time, she declined all intervention or further interference. Per-

haps it is not generally known, or since then forgotten, that in 1848 Ireland also began to stir once again, and sent a deputation to the provisional government of France in order to congratulate it on the overthrow of monarchy, and summon the republic to help "the oppressed nationality of Ireland," but Lamartine, who received this deputation, refused all assistance emphatically.

CHAPTER XI.

THE ROYAL HOTEL—GEORGE-STREET—THE ROYAL ALBERT SALOON—THE LIMERICK PRIMA DONNA—BONNIE DUNDEE—AN IRISH SUNDAY—LIMERICK LASSES—A BRANCH-LINE—CASTLE CONNELL—THE CASTLE OF THE O'BRIENS—THE GENIUS OF IRELAND—MISS O'KEANE—THE RAPIDS—THE CHAPEL.

BEHIND Wellesley-bridge I parted from my old corporal. He walked with drooping head, and in a state of general seediness, towards the barracks, while I proceeded to the "Royal Hotel," where I intended to rest. As I sat down to my dinner I felt as if I had been walking through centuries, I seemed to myself so old, so grey, so superannuated, like a man returning from the other shore. I should not have felt surprised had a French chevalier, with a feathered hat and high riding-boots, or an Irish rebel—such a one as went aboard with Sarsfield—sat down opposite me. Such was not to be thought of in Cruise's coffee-room, which was arranged on the English model. The waiters were stiff and grand, although the green island peeped out at times at their elbows, or through some treacherous holes. Gas-lights were burning and striving to display their brilliancy through dusty globes as well as they could. Wearied travellers were seated at tables, like myself, and shouting

for newspapers, very few of which were to be had. My dinner was in the mean while brought in under covers, as in England; but the peculiar tricks the cook plays in this way, both with the hunger and imagination of the diner, were not so pleasantly terminated as is the case there. The fish was half raw, and red; the joint—mutton, of course—was uneatable from the opposite fault. The mutton patriotism becomes, from this point westward, always more and more opposed to the demand a well-regulated stomach must make for a reasonable variety. At last, you rise with mutton, and go to bed with mutton, and the whole world seems to exhale a smell of mutton. Wherever I looked and felt, the same discomfort; the porter bottles were badly corked, the cheese was utterly decayed, and the butter was ornamented with bread-crumbs; the plates and dishes were strongly plated, on the other hand, and the waiters' cravats of the most aristocratic stiffness. Fortunately, my appetite was not alarming, and I was soon out again, with a cigar between my lips.

It was Saturday evening, and George-street was extremely animated. This street is the promenade of Limerick, and by the light of the gas-lamps—which burnt here at very considerable intervals—the promenading crowd walked up and down. A few ladies in crinolines, a few gentlemen in hats—but the majority of the women walked about with naked feet, and the men wore tail-coats and torn trousers, the national costume of Ireland. In the cellars things went on jollily enough. In one of them—a store and a barber's at once—one sat at the door being shaved by gas-light, while another was drinking whisky. In other cellars roasting and baking for the Sunday were going on, and producing a far from

agreeable smell. Limerick looked far more cheerful and lively by night than by day. It seems as if the Irish, after the fashion of nervous men, only awake to a consciousness and use of their strength with the first evening lights. Women sat at the street corners selling fruit and potatoes, and little girls with black hair and southern faces lay on the pavement asleep, fantastically illumined by the flickering flame of the torches. Here and again, a member of the Irish constabulary was posted, in his shako and black tail-coat, and gradually the watchmen also made their appearance with their long sticks.

But between the first evening light and the long sticks of the watchmen lay a peculiar pleasure which I was to enjoy. I had naively looked about and inquired for something that would fill up the idle portion of the evening. There was certainly a theatre in Limerick, but there were no actors. Places of amusement, in our sense, must not be looked for in Ireland; but at last I heard of the "Royal Albert Saloons," in which concerts took place every night. I had, I grant, lost confidence in all "Royal" things in Ireland, still I decided on not leaving this sole place of public amusement in Limerick—for such it proved—unvisited. I certainly had trouble enough in finding it: some declared that they knew nothing about it, while others knew its name and position in the most general way. At length I was directed to Arthur Quay.

Here, by the water-side, matters were tolerably lively. Several vessels lay close to the wharf, and only a few lights from the shore lit up their tackling. There was a sea smell when turning towards it, and a herring smell on looking landwards. All, therefore, kept to its element. The sailors seemed to be roaming about; they lounged

in their tarry jackets against the posts, or lay on the steps of the subterraneous whisky shops. They smoked and laughed and talked, while barefooted boys were playing among the piled-up casks and ships' ropes. A gas-lamp, with broken panes—the only one visible—flickered restlessly in the breeze, and before one of the houses on the quay a tar fire burned in a dish. I was directed to this house when I asked for the "Royal Albert." In front of the house was the ordinary public, with its doors opening on the street. The saloons were in the yard. In royal matters it is allowable to talk in the plural; in everyday life the "Saloons," however, were nothing more than a wretched dirty hole, filled with smoke and stench; in the background a species of stage, below it a place for the common folk, above, a far from secure gallery for the gentry. Of such there were three or four present besides myself. They appeared travellers, like myself, but more probably for commercial reasons. Of travellers for amusement there was at this time only one in Limerick, possibly in all Ireland, and that was I. In the room sat about ten men at nailed-down tables. They represented the people, smoked long clay-pipes, and filled the intervals with curses, because they broke so often in their mouths. Matters were managed in a free-and-easy style here, I must confess. A lady came to meet me, when I entered the gentlemen's gallery, and what a lady! She was the prima donna of the "Royal Albert," and wore a large flowered cotton dress, and a tin diadem on her brow. She was past those years in which prime donne are wont to be dangerous, and seemed to have experienced the joys and sorrows of life in every shape. She offered me her hand, and led me to a wooden chair; she then mixed hot whisky and

water with brown sugar, and had no objection, when I asked her to drink the mixture.

In the mean while, the singing had begun, most of the songs in a primitive condition, without accompaniment, some with the orchestra. This consisted of a violin soloist, at whose performance the gentlemen's hair of the gallery audience stood on end; and, on specially solemn occasions, a boy came forward, who treated us to the piano. Most of the notes of this unhappy instrument no longer struck, and the boy, whom I had seen not long before chasing others at the water-side, had no idea of the sweet science. The former did no harm, and the latter was not needed; for the violinist pointed out to the boy, before the beginning of each piece, two keys, which, at an agreed-on nod, he had to strike incessantly till the end. According to his master's hints, he struck them slower, quicker, softer, or louder, sometimes with both thumbs, and then, when these had grown tired, for a variation, with the two middle fingers.

The time arrived when the prima donna was compelled to leave us. She went down stairs into the lower room, and her garments rustled between the tables. The rustling certainly sounded like calico, but the more aristocratic was her carriage, the more proudly did the tin diadem flash. She did not deign a glance to the mob of ten; and her eye, her smile, her heart, were directed to the five "gentlemen." The violinist had pointed out the two keys to the boy, and the latter sat, afraid of losing them, with outstretched fingers and half-turned face, that he, too, might notice her first appearance on the boards. At length she stepped forth, and stepped so heavily that the thin framework of boards grumbled, and the boy in his fright lost the two keys he had

hitherto pressed. The maestro first gave the boy a box on the ears, and showed him the lost keys once more; then he passed the bow over the strings, while she employed her handkerchief. Then she began singing: it was the song of "Bonnie Dundee," the dauntless Highland chief, and his tartan bonnets. It is a Scottish song, and the mountain daring of the Highland clan is recorded in the peculiar, abrupt melody. But what did the Limerick prima donna make of this song! Oh, Lord! With her shrill soprano voice she marched into the field against harmony and bravery, and they, with Bonnie Dundee, and fiddle, and piano, fled from it in dismay. It is true that the boy tried to make a fight of it for a while with his thumbs, but the two notes grew gradually weaker and more undecided, and at length died out in a helpless whine. The violinist, too, attempted in vain what a powerful bow could do against a prima donna. It was of no use, she kept her position, and arm, bow, and violin sank, wearied to death. It was a life and death struggle for the hegemony in the kingdom of false notes, and flight was the only chance of salvation. But her tartan bonnets and the thunder of applause from the ten of the people and the four gentry, under which the Valkyre of song seemed to quit the battle-field, pursued me through two streets.

The Sunday bells awoke me next morning. It was a rainy day, cold and uncomfortable. I shivered all over in the dark, gloomy bedroom allotted to me. I had put on my over-coat, and yet shivered. I felt as if a world and an eternity lay between me and the golden season of the lakes. All had changed, all had another colour, another tone. Poor, bare, naked, all seemed to have been submerged in dirt and irregularity. My window offered a

prospect of the Arthur Quay and the Shannon. In spite of the piercing cold of the autumn morning the river was crowded with men and horses bathing together : and that took place in front of the most fashionable and lively streets in Limerick ; and on the quay stones the men performed their toilet, while the horses coolly shook off the water drops. No one who has not witnessed it can form an idea of such a state of nature. It is almost as if the wild inhabitants of Ireland, who, according to Giraldus, had goats' beards and bulls' feet, and, according to Bernard of Cirencester, smeared their bodies with blood, had risen from their peat graves to bathe in the Shannon in the foggy October morning, in ridicule of the Sunday propriety and George-street. At the same time, all these men looked ugly rather than otherwise : their faces were flattened, their features coarse, their build disagreeable. A fable about the prettiness of the "Limerick lasses" certainly runs through all guide-books, and a French tourist, in no way distinguished for his politeness to Ireland, not even for his compliment to the Limerick ladies, says "that they are more remarkable for great beauty than their husbands are for good sense." But my Picturesque Tourist was the only place where I saw anything of this belauded beauty.

The streets were wretched enough ; the Sunday and the Sunday clothes even produced no material change in them. In all its classes the people was shabby and poverty-stricken, as usual. There was not a trace of the comfort, pious monotony, and religious retirement of an English Sunday. Trade went on in the streets as on any week-day, and though the large shops of the English in George-street were closed, the women stood

at the corners with apples and plums, and cabbage and fish, and the retail trade, which always produces the greatest and most disagreeable noise, filled the low districts and the cellars. Wherever I turned I fancied myself still in Petticoat-lane or Seven-dials, which, as it is known, possess the odious privilege of trading on Sunday, and, in addition, buying and selling stolen wares.

In the midst of the wretchedness and discomfort my surroundings produced in me, a letter came across me. It dated from happier days; it had been given me by Mr. Farquhar, on the evening I took leave of him, with strict orders to deliver it as speedily as possible. I took it up and gazed at the address: "Miss Norah O'Keane, Castle Connell, Limerick." This name twinkled before me like a star in a gloomy night. We poor earth-pilgrims believe in stars; oft in foreign lands, in pathless deserts, they have guided us. I had formed the acquaintance and learned to like Norah's brother, the student with the sweet sad eye and the soft sad heart, full of the sufferings of his country. I longed to see her and must do so this very day.

"Where is Castle Connell?" I asked the waiter who answered my bell.

"About six miles from here, sir, on the Killaloe-road. If you wish to visit the village, there will be an opportunity this afternoon. A railway has been made there, which will be opened to-day."

I at once started, and the Limerick station was soon reached. It is a building which has stood for some years, and the new railway was only a branch, which was to be continued through the midland counties, and its opening must be the occasion for some festivity; so I expected,

but was in every way deceived. A complete state of nature prevailed at the Limerick station; not a bench, not a waiting-room, nor any of the superfluous civilisation of the rest of Europe; only here and there a truck, on which you can sit, or a ladder against which you can lean. I had found a place on a quantity of boards; in the centre between the rails stood a wooden booth, on which was written in chalk, "Booking-office," and in it sat a boy of about fourteen as clerk. There was not a sign of flags and garlands and merriment, as on the occasion of opening our railways. This people has no delight in what is new; it is not sensible of the progress of the age, and opposes to all events the gloomy feeling of distrust; the mob stood round with coarse, stupid faces, and the women I saw among them were also atrociously ugly.

I felt happier, though, when seated in the cushioned carriage and flying along to the well-known sound and inhaling the breeze, which blew damp but fresh across the wide, fog-hidden plain. The village was reached, and its Sunday quiet received the wayfarer. Hitherto it has had no dealings with strangers; and here for the first time the contradiction was explained, which I had borne in my breast so painfully since entering Limerick. Give me wretchedness, the whole sufferings of humanity, and I will endure them; but give them to me unveiled, and do not try to mask the painful necessity of their apparition in shabby garments. Do not call them by another name. Oh! misery has a powerful and world-convulsing voice, and it thunders its veto into your face if you dare to deny it. Here this voice was toned down to a soft, melancholy whisper; the trees rustled gently, the water murmured gently, and gently sang the wind through the laurel hedges of the wayside. The village

is exquisitely situated at the foot of its hills, and the summit of the first of them is crowned by the ruins of an old castle. Come with me ! we will weep for the fate of this country beneath ruins : when we are under ruins we are in Ireland. The broken genius of this land lives in ruins, and awaits the time when it will wave its drooping wings anew. It waits, and the time is already dimly visible.

On a conical rock in the centre of a blooming, pleasant plain, surrounded in the distance by bluish, moderately high mountain ranges, stand the ruins of the castle, lovingly preserved. A fine broad gravel-path leads up to it from the village, and at the top all is clean and fresh. One half of the corner tower still stands, some walls also remain with windows and doors, broken it is true, but overgrown with pleasant ivy. This is all that is left of the castle in which the sons and grandsons of the great Brian Boroo once lived ; nothing remains of the halls in which the red Earl of Ulster once held his court ; nothing of the keep in which the Irish rebels defied to the last man the arms of the mighty Oranger. But scattered around lie huge fragments of stone, defying decay, which the Prince of Hesse blew up after capturing the mountain castle. In many other Irish ruins I found graves ; but here all was filled up with pleasant flower-beds, breathing reconciliation. They had been twined round the relics of the castle like garlands of recollection and hope. The whole ruin seemed blooming and fragrant ; and in the dim glow of the pale afternoon sun, Ireland seemed to me a woman—young, lovely, of rare beauty, a widow, who with moist eyes, but smiling and with modest hand, strews flowers over the ruins of a national fortalice, destroyed in the struggle for her liberty

and her honour, and over the resting-place of the beloved who fell for her sake.

The new event which connected the village with the world—ah, it was surely a sorrowful world—had brought some life to the quiet spot. The stranger was regarded as a wondrous apparition, and they endeavoured with modest readiness to show him the way to the place he sought. A tall avenue of trees at the end of the village received me, and at the other extremity I saw the pleasant house, with its white walls and shining windows, on which the late sun was glistening. The O'Keanes, as I now heard, are an old race of the Irish nobility. Their forefathers were princes in this land, but as they ever remained faithful to the cause of their people, they had their full share in every new misfortune by which it was constantly pursued; they suffered by every persecution, every defeat of the Irish, every victory of the English, and of the extensive estates they once possessed, they were restricted to this last outwork on the border of Castle Connell village.

A large court-yard joined the old venerable trees, under which I had been walking. Shrubs, still damp with rain, grew over the front of the house; the last of the hedge-roses was dying away on its stalk, and the green of the leaves was assuming the russet of late autumn. An old man-servant asked for my card, and he had not been gone long, ere an aged, venerable gentleman with snow-white hair and dark eyes, appeared in the passage.

"You are heartily welcome," the old gentleman said; "my son in Dublin has written about you several times, and we are glad to welcome a friend of his beneath our roof."

The door of a pleasant room on the ground floor was

opened, and, introduced by the hospitable host, the mother, and then Norah, the sister of my friend, came towards me with outstretched hand. A heavenly peace seemed to preside in this room ; while the parting splendour of nature, sunning itself in the soft light of sinking day, greeted me through the windows outside, the warm reflexion of the chimney fire played on the bright gay carpet. A blue paper covered the walls, and the sportive gleam of the afternoon threw a golden hue over it. A comfortable, fragrant atmosphere pervaded the room, and I did not feel myself a stranger long. I seated myself at once by the side of the ladies. I was pleased with the dear, suffering face of the mother, doubly ennobled by aristocratic regularity of feature and matronly dignity ; and my soul inhaled fresh strengthening in looking at the daughter. The oval of her face was soft ; but decision was marked in the firm lines round her mouth, and her dark eye was full of fire. I could have imagined this young lady a princess of her people, with golden threads woven in her dark luxuriant hair.

Visitors arrived — several neighbouring squires with their wives — and were kindly welcomed like old acquaintances. They collected round the oak-table in the centre of the room, and drew nearer the fire. The daughter led me to a window, and we talked. The view on this side commanded the high road, the hilly land with a few patches of forest, broad meadows, groups of cabins, and the glistening windings of the Shannon. When all was quiet, a hoarse murmur could be heard, growing louder and then softer, but never entirely ceasing.

“Come,” Miss O’Keane said, “I will show you the rapids.”

Just behind the house we entered a path which led to

a wood, that glistened wondrously in the beams of the departing sun. The murmur grew louder the further we proceeded; it overpowered every word we spoke, almost every thought we formed. The grass became damp, as did our faces, and a cloud of fine spray fell on us. The tall ferns bent back and forwards, and over them the mighty trees bowed, and sought to embrace each other, starting back so soon as they came in contact. Presently we stood before the waterfall. The whole body of the Shannon, now strongly illumined by the bright red glimmering of the setting sun, pours here over rugged rocks. Nothing can be more perplexing at first sight than a river, mighty as any in Britain, rolling and tumbling in wild confusion over a series of rugged, rude, and waterworn rocks.

We walked up the hill and at length stood over the village in front of the chapel, which is charmingly situated, surrounded by laurel bushes. It stood in a deep solitude, and divine peace had settled upon it in the russet clouds of evening. The last sunbeams which poured forth through the black clouds rising in the west, fell through the windows and sought the image of the Madonna, round whose head they collected. On the outer walls twined a broad layer of ivy, so thick and full, that it heaved like a field of ripe corn when the evening breeze glided over it. One of the little towers was entirely overgrown with ivy, so that it looked like a tower of verdure.

The path led back past the house, but I would not enter, for the sun had already set and I must think about returning. She did not press me to stay longer.

"We shall meet again," she said, as we shook hands.

“We must not part on the same day we meet.” Then she disappeared in the portal of her house.

I walked through the village. The clouds rising in the west had covered the whole vault of the sky; the last beams of the sun had died out, and a splashing shower poured down on me ere I had passed through the village. I sought shelter in an inn which fortunately stood by the road-side, and went into the upper room, reserved for better class visitors, where I had something warming to drink.

CHAPTER XII.

THE CONVEYANCE—FIRST CLASS—BOUND FOR THE WEST—AN IRISH BUILDER—KILLALOE—HIS EMINENCE—BRIAN BOROO—INISH KALTRA ST. PATRICK'S PURGATORY—PORTUMNA—CLONMACNOISE—M'DERMOTT'S CHURCH—ST. KIARAN'S STONE—ATHLONE—THE COMFORTS OF AN IRISH INN—THE POSTMASTER.

THE next morning there stood at the door of the Royal Hotel of Limerick a wondrously shaped vehicle. It was a long open cart on four wheels, drawn by two half-lame cripples. The centre of the conveyance was occupied by herring barrels, large chests and wooden poles; on both sides, however, longways, were the seats on which the unhappy forms, representing passengers, hung rather than sat. At the same time a cold rain poured piteously down, and the streets were half under water.

"So soon as the rain has held up a little, we shall start, sir," a man with a long whip said, who walked into the room to seize my two carpet-bags, the white one and the red one. Good Heavens! one was no longer red, the other no longer white; they had lost the hues of love and innocence, and assumed that ashen grey colour which follows the loss of both.

"Then that is the conveyance for which I have taken a ticket?" I asked, sadly.

"That is it, sir," the man with the whip answered, and walked off with my two companions under his arm. He mounted on the "conveyance," and both were buried under herring-casks.

A pause came in the mighty shower, and the man with the whip proposed to take advantage of it. He gave the signal for getting up. My ticket was for a first class.

"First-class? Here!" the man said, and pointed to a seat on the left side of the vehicle.

The advantages of the first class were great. It had a woollen leather-bound rug, now saturated with wet, for first-class legs; it had a long smooth leathern cushion for higher comfort, but which was rendered very illusory, as said cushion had a tendency for slipping off; finally, it gave us the exclusive right of leaning against the herring-casks and chests. The second-class passengers were seated on the right bench, and the man with the whip watched sharply that they did not have any of the first-class privileges, especially leaning against the barrels. The third class stood on the hind board of the conveyance, and the company there was considerably mixed. There was a red-haired girl without shoes, and a man in a tail-coat, the tails being tied on with string; there stood a boy of sixteen making love to the red-haired girl, and an old woman who could not speak English, but cursed us very powerfully in Irish. Above all sat the man with the whip, and all the three classes had the following things in common: the roof of heaven, the shudderingly cold rain, and the two cripples, which stopped every quarter of an hour, and only proceeded on a hint from the man with the whip.

Here commenced the misery which I bravely endured,

on whisky and mutton, almost into the winter, on Ireland's bogs, and in her mountain villages, until I at length became even Hibernis Hibernior, until my coat was torn like theirs, till I only consisted, body and soul, of fragments, and looked like a savage Norman settler of the fourteenth century. The day of Limerick is the great turning-point in my Irish romance of travel.

Good humour and the whisky-bottle became henceforth my most faithful allies. Dark rain-clouds were over me and before me ; at times a cold sunbeam forced its way through, and wind and rustling trees surrounded me. The road ran along the most glorious lofty avenues of trees, although there is but little wood, throughout Ireland, and it grows rare from this point, till it entirely ceases ; still, the trees I saw here, and further to the west, were nobler, larger, and fuller than any in Ireland.

On the road lay an upset cart with broken wheels, and full of hay. No one troubled himself about it ; no one knew, no one asked to whom it belonged ; it will lie there and rot, like so many ruined houses and cabins around it. A little further on was a valley ; in the stream which ran through it lay broken cart-wheels, already rotted, with rust-eaten tires. A little further on again, past the valley, a man was building himself a house : he was standing on a wooden bench ; mud, stones, and a few beams lay around him ; there was no one to help him in his solitary task. It is not very difficult, however, to build a house here. I always thought of the houses we as children used to build in the garden ; they all appear so arranged as if they would be inhabited for a short time and then deserted. Mud walls, and over them a thatched roof, such is an Irish house : only the grand ones have small windows with glass panes ;

the rest—and they constitute the majority—have merely small holes in the walls, through which light, air, and rain enter simultaneously. The interior is composed of a single room, sooty and dirty, filled with suffocating smoke, and rendered pestiferous by the people who live, eat, and sleep in it. The cattle, if they have any permanent abode in the household of an Irish family, are quartered close by in another mud-hole, but generally run about, left to themselves, in happy freedom, horse and donkey, calf and cow, pigs, ducks, and geese, all in a delightful medley: so that you might almost fancy that the cattle are better off in Ireland than the human beings. The man building his house behaved with that carelessness and indifference characteristic of the Irishman, when working for himself. He let his hammer and trowel fall so soon as he heard the rolling of our conveyance, looked at us as if he had never seen anything of the sort before, and was apparently delighted to have an excuse for idling for a while.

In this way we reached Killaloe, and the shores of the gloomy Lough Derg, where a small steamer lay in readiness, on which I intended to cross the lake. There were not many passengers; on deck sat an old gentleman in an easy-chair, expressly provided for him, with a man servant on one side, and a young gentleman in a naval uniform on the other. I learned afterwards that the old gentleman was the Catholic Bishop of ——. Besides these was a humble peasant lad, who did not venture into his excellency's vicinity, but modestly remained forward, and disappeared at the next station. Then, of course, there was the captain, a dark elderly Irishman, and down in the cabin was Juliet, the prettiest Irish girl I had seen for a long time. She rarely appeared on deck, and seemed very much afraid of the captain; but when we came to

dangerous places, and she knew the captain could not leave the wheel, then my Juliet's eyes glistened, and—oh, I shall never forget those dangerous places !

The weather had again become sunny, and his eminence the bishop found it very agreeable in the open air. His relation, the naval officer, cast a glance at times into the cabin, where Juliet's dark eyes flashed, but his eminence took too great pleasure in his conversation and gave him no furlough. I also took a part in it now and then, and I allow that his eminence was most amiable to me and showed me everything that could interest a stranger. Lough Derg is one of the gloomiest and most inhospitable districts in Ireland : but, fortunately, it grew pleasanter and the sky became blue, but a strong breeze rippled the waters, which glistened like steel in the sunlight. The shores, along which we passed were hilly and only scantily covered with brushwood ; the rest was naked and greenish-grey in colour. On these shores once stood the Castle of Kincora, belonging to the celebrated king Brian Boroo. His eminence pointed to the spot, which is bog like all the rest ; a scanty growth of grass covers it, but no ruins can be discovered. Only the popular myth and poetry keep the spot in holy recollection, and when I went down into the cabin, Juliet was singing :

“ Remember the glories of Brian the brave,
Though the days of the hero are o'er ;
Though lost to Monona, and cold in the grave,
He returns to Kincora no more ! ”

His eminence was an affable, enlightened, and amiable gentleman ; he inquired the purpose of my journey, and praised my design, when I had explained it to him. So long as we remained fellow travellers, he did his utmost to help me ; no place of the slightest importance far or

near escaped his attention, and he gave me kindly and reliable information about them all. At length, however, it happened that the causes for such information grew more frequent, while the hearer, who had every right to be grateful, was less frequently visible.

"Where is our young traveller?" his eminence would then ask the lieutenant on his right. The latter, with the most heroic self-denial, would reply that he was down in the cabin, posting up his diary, which his eminence more than once designed to praise. But at length we reached a spot when such a work must be interrupted to the benefit of the whole. The officer requested me to come up, in his eminence's name, and I did so.

"That is Inish Kaltra, the Holy Isle," the prelate said, "a place highly celebrated in the sacred history of our country. It was the home of St. Camin, who founded a monastery there at the beginning of the seventh century. Take up the glass and tell me what ruins you can see."

"I see," I began, "a round tower close to the lake. It stands perfect and erect, looking down over the black gloomy water, and by it stands a ruined wall half covered with ivy and creepers, while round it are graves."

"The crumbling walls," the bishop explained, "are the remains of the Seven Churches, which Brian Boroo is said to have restored here after the Danes had destroyed them in 834. But the work of human hands does not endure. Time has destroyed them, and the ruins lie there. Now look to the left of the Seven Churches, for a clump of bushes."

"I have found it, your eminence."

"Under those bushes is the cave, which is still called St. Patrick's Purgatory, and regarded as holy. The story goes that St. Patrick implored the Lord to remove

the entrance to purgatory to Ireland, so that the then unbelieving inhabitants might be convinced of the immortality of the soul and the tortures which await the godless on the threshold between time and eternity. God heard His apostle's prayer, and the entrance to purgatory has since been in Ireland. Pious monks guarded this entrance, and the enthusiasm of the middle ages brought thousands here from all parts of Europe. Now, all is different; the world has lost with superstition much of the true faith, and fervour only exists in remote spots. Annual processions are still made to St. Patrick's Purgatory, both here and higher up in the Donegal mountains, where there are another Lough Derg and an isle, which the people declare is the true entrance to purgatory. The English government does not like these processions, but it does us Irish clergy injustice in saying that we favour them. We do not favour them: but we feel sad when we regard this people, as it looks back, and, in the fulness of its heart, clings to a cross which is grey with old age and overgrown with moss."

I took one more glance at the dark heaving lake and the sacred island, which was slowly disappearing in the distance. Then I went down into the cabin, and thought over St. Patrick's Purgatory.

Suddenly the vessel stopped, and I went at once on deck. His eminence had risen, and the vessel was at Terryglass. Close to the water's edge was a four-horsed carriage, and a clerical brother of his reverence seemed to be awaiting his arrival. I shook the old gentleman's offered hand heartily, and with honest gratitude accepted the blessing which he deigned to give me for my further tour and its prosperous termination. Then he walked over the board ashore, followed by the lieutenant and the

man-servant with the easy-chair ; I saw him reverentially embraced by the other priest, and carriage and steamer started simultaneously, I remaining henceforth the sole passenger. The country was still flat and barren, only in the distance were lowering blue mountains.

"That is the Devil's Bite," the captain said. "The devil, once on a time, in a great passion—I have forgotten what about—bit a piece out of that mountain, and spat it out again at Cashel, a hundred miles away ; and on this Devil's Bite—in spite of hell—the sacred edifices of Cashel were built, which have now fallen into ruins."

Wherever you look, ruins ! Heaven and hell themselves seem to have become ruins in Ireland.

The vessel pursued its voyage very slowly. After steaming for an hour, we only met a tug lazily dragging two flat boats. The wind blew over our heads, and the reeds on the bank waved sadly and groaned. As the man at the wheel told me, it is always windy in these waters, and, in winter, piercingly cold, so that the entire lake is often frozen.

At length we reached the upper end of the lake and Portumma, a poor little town, behind which the Shannon begins again. This river—which connects the "blue" Lough Rie, further northwards, with Lough Derg, and pours into the sea at Limerick—rises high up in Con-naught, and was formerly more animated than now, when only now and then the paddle-wheel of a steamer or the oar of a fishing-boat throws up its wild waves. It flows broadly and sluggishly through reedy banks. At Banagher there is a swivel-bridge, which, however, seems to be rusting for lack of use ; the steamer is the only vessel that now and then sets the old screws in motion ; the fishing-boats go under it with ease. Here

the borders of three counties join, two of them belonging to Connaught. From this moment we are in the west of Ireland.

Close to the shore stands Clonmacnoise, one of the most venerable ruins in this island of the saints. The banks rise here slightly, and on the grass-clad mound stand the two round towers, ruins of churches, and a cemetery. On the first hillock are the sunken walls of an old ecclesiastical building; on another hill is the great round tower, O'Rourke's Tower. The roof has disappeared, and a broad belt of ivy winds like a garland round its centre. Down in the bottom, rather further inland, is the second round tower, still perfect, and behind it "M'Dermott's Church," with its splendid round arched portal, fresh and clean, as if carved but yesterday. From the mound of the great round tower down to the second the whole ground is covered with upright gravestones. Whoever is buried here goes straight from the earth to heaven: no evil intermediate spirit has power over him. Among the gravestones stands a ruined tomb, St. Kieran's Church, where the saint himself is said to be buried. The peasants have torn up the ground around, because a piece of earth from the spot, dissolved in their drink, cures the body of the faithful from every illness. The wonder of Clonmacnoise is the "St. Kieran's Stone," a cross of rare beauty, covered with sacred images. A wall surrounds the holy spot, which is to this day the scene of many pilgrimages and processions.

Now our voyage was at an end. We stopped at a broad weir, over which the Shannon falls like a cascade. Slightly elevated over it, and with the fresh breeze from the water blowing through its streets, is Athlone. I went up the landing steps to the dam, where a carriage from

the "Royal Hotel" was waiting. I certainly saw in Ireland all sorts of vehicles, such as I had no idea of before, but one like that belonging to the "Royal Hotel" of Athlone never crossed my vision before or after. It was a coffin nailed upon two wheels. Not an actual coffin, if I wish to adhere to the truth, but an edifice which looked like nothing on the earth so much as a coffin. It was lined inside with black, and rags like widows' weeds hung down from the seats. The coffin had no window, but a door, and through the door poured, in addition to a certain amount of light, more wind than a man, whether he be dead or alive, can stand. I had no notion of the route the coffin conveyed me; only at times, through a dizzy feeling that came over me, and the increased draught through the door, I noticed that it was turning a corner. The noise of the streets we must have reached by this time, sounded hollow, and I felt like an apparently dead man who is going to be buried.

At length, the carriage stopped, and I was released. But though I felt so delighted to find, on stepping out, that I was still alive, a terrible apprehension crossed my mind when I entered the "Royal" house, longing for a speedy and good dinner. The hotel-keeper's shirt hung out, and boots yelled because the waiter hit him over the head with a gun which had somehow come astray amid my luggage. The coffee-room looked as if it had not been swept or cleaned since the creation; the hair-cloth had been torn down from the sofa, and the horsehair was visible beneath, filled with dust and filth of every description. In spite of my hunger and thirst, I turned back on the threshold: I could not stop here. Ah! I had not yet collected the experiences that lay beyond Athlone. My hunger was still an aristocrat, and my

thirst looked still at the edges of the glasses. This I presently forgot. But I had not got so far yet, and with my bags in my hands I went out in the street to look for the other hotel, which I found; but no dinner was to be had there, only butter, cheese, beer, and bread. "Travellers must be contented," I shouted to my aristocrat; and he humiliated himself, and did penance, and ate bread-and-cheese, and drank sour beer to it. But it was all very jolly; that I will not deny. The coarser the food, the better my temper became: it must be true that fasting makes a man sharp. And I had table music too, for a piper stood in the street, and the monotonous droning measures of his instrument told me of old Highland heroes and lovely girls. Opposite was the post-office. The postmaster is at the same time bookseller, dealer in wine and cigars, apothecary, and surgeon. On his sign-board he announces that he had various articles of perfumery and patent medicines for sale, and put on leeches. In his window was a picturesquely decorated card of steel pens; under it, by Rarey's "Art of Taming Wild Horses," paraded "Hunt's family pills," for overloaded stomachs; behind them, "cigars," a couple of dolls, a child's drum; and, as a comic conclusion to the whole, an assortment of tooth-brushes fastened on a string.

After gazing my fill at this spectacle—fortunately I had no need of Hunt's family pills now or hereafter—I went into the street, to form an idea of the good town of Athlone before sunset. It has the true character of a provincial town, and the streets are narrow. The old castle, celebrated for its defence against the army of the Oranger in 1690 and 1691, with its thick walls, gives the town, at the first glance, the appearance of a small German fortified place. The portion which stands on

the hill is dirty and decayed ; the lower portion, on the water-side, looks something better. Here the houses were in a state of decent preservation, and the vicinity of poverty was less perceptible. The men, so many of the six thousand two hundred inhabitants as met me, were not all so defectively clothed as the landlord of the Royal Hotel, and the women were something prettier than those of Limerick. But perhaps the lovely evening light had something to do with this.

With the setting sun I quitted Athlone, and the engine bore me across the gloomy plains towards Galway, the object of my deepest longing, the capital of the west, the celebrated seat of the "old tribes."

CHAPTER XIII.

ARRIVAL IN GALWAY—TRACES OF THE SPANIARDS—MIXTURE OF BLOOD
—THE SPANISH PARADE—THE CLADDAGH WOMEN—A PECULIAR RACE
—SUPERSTITIONS—LEGENDS—CLADDAGH COURTING—FUNERAL CUS-
TOMS—IRISH PIGS—THE GREAT BALL—THE OLD FAMILIES—
MR. CARDEN—MISS O'KEANE—WILD KATHLEEN—GREEN AND
ORANGE.

IT was midnight: the full moon shone through the heavy scudding clouds, and I was still wandering about the streets of Galway. The fresh sea-breeze that filled the roads, the old recollections around me, the solitude, produced the first impression upon me. And yet there was more life in the great square and in the streets than there is in London at this hour. But it was the life of a dream—for the soul, and not for the eye—with no distinct outline, but flying so soon as the hand is stretched out to it. Boys sat on the stone posts, girls stood in the doorways, and the broad dark blue shadows of the gabled houses fell across the narrow streets. In the ground floor of the houses there was still light, and the doors were open. I had left the region of rough autumn behind me; here was a damp cold summer night.

When I returned to my hotel, late enough, I found, contrary to all expectation, and against all rules, the house busy. There were lights in the passages, men

were at work in some of the rooms, and among the sounds could be noticed the suppressed laughing of the chambermaid, and the stumbling of the boots up and down stairs. That would have been just the music to send me to sleep. There was a light in the smoking-room, so I walked in, and found a gentleman seated before the fire. I sat down near him, lit a cigar, and ordered some whisky-and-water. My neighbour was a man of middle age, most agreeable in his manners; and as the quiet of night is the best master of the ceremonies, we were soon chattering away together. My obliging neighbour, to whom I will give the name of Mr. Morris, lived in the vicinity of Galway, and had come into town for the sake of a great ball, which was to take place in the hotel the day after the next. This ball, he told me, was held every year about this time, and was regarded as an opportunity for the meeting of the "old families," connected together for centuries, and whose numerous representatives lived around Galway. Other houses, distinguished by their age and past history, were also accustomed to be present at this festivity, from the most distant parts of Ireland.

Mr. Morris, who saw with what interest I listened to his communication, asked me if I could not remain in Galway over the ball, and in that event be his guest? I was delighted at the prospect of being able to take a glance at the life of the last patricians of Ireland, after wandering about so long in her most wretched hovels, and I gratefully accepted the offer. The fire in the chimney had long gone out, and the laughing had died out, too, on the stairs. We separated for the night, and each sought his room through the silent house.

The pleasant sun and the blue sky greeted me when I

woke at an early hour. Before me lay a large spacious square; around it stood large stately frontages, most of the buildings having round arched doors, and some, I confess, thatched roofs. In the centre was a broad, carefully tended grass-plot, with cleanly kept paths, bordered by flowers and bushes. To the right the city merges away, almost without the transition being perceptible, into meadows; on the left it extends deep into the plain, with its pointed gables and numerous chimneys grouped round the old tower. Round the entire panorama I surveyed from my window, runs a low unwooded chain of hills. If I opened the door of my room, I had a view over pastures of the wide ocean, and the sails flashing in and out of the harbour.

This city stands majestically on the sea, on which a *Fata Morgana* is at times visible, a *Fata Morgana* of better times, a passing shadow of that which it once was. The chroniclers are full of its praise; they talk of the riches of its merchants, the elegance and politeness of their manners, the hospitality and the splendour of its "old tribes." Doctor Molyneux, who undertook a "journey in Connaught" one hundred and fifty years prior to myself, says of Galway that, "excepting Dublin, it is, take it altogether, the best city in Ireland. The houses are all built of stone, a species of marble, one like the other; they look like palaces owing to their doorways and strong walls and windows, and seem all to have been built at the same time, after the pattern, as I hear, of some city in Flanders."

Molyneux is not wrong; there is something in these narrow streets, whose pavement seems worn down by the footsteps of centuries, of these gables, which stand

heavily opposite each other, that reminds me of similar mansions in Bruges or Ghent ; but I fancy it is the Spanish grandezza which produces this effect, even though it has fallen asleep, there as here, under the stony splendour, which is not suited for our days. It is the breath from cold, damp doorways ; it is the gloomy saddening glance that rests upon us, as from a glassy eye, from these moss-grown windows. We pass through the streets of a city that has left its age behind it ; whose charm lies in days which have long passed away. We are strangers in it, and the people who inhabit it have assumed a sleepy appearance, and while we—the visitors from another world which still lives—fancy we are dreaming, they wander about—like forms of our imagination, and not like real men, like beings many hundred years old—through the gloomy shops and the mouldering air of the halls. Spain herself, her people and entire kingdom, leads an existence like that of our fancy when we lie asleep, and her relics in other countries are spread about like poppy-seeds. They stupify, they lull to sleep, they produce oblivion and dreaminess ; and Galway is rich in these relics of the Spanish reign ; much richer than any city on the Continent. Flanders defended itself against Spain and fell away from her ; but Ireland longed for Spain, and set hopes on Spain, as it did on France, a hundred years after the last relics of this hope were dashed on to the north coast with the Armada, and Don Juan de Aguila had quitted Kinsale harbour with the remnants of his expedition. “Spanish wine” and “Papal blessing” were in those days the words which carried their minds and their steps to the southward. What says the old popular ballad ?—

The Pope of Rome has sent thee home
A pardon free:
A priestly train o'er the briny main
Shall greet my love,
And wine of Spain to thy health we'll drain,
My Ros geal Dubh !

But the Spanish wine that intoxicated them proved fallacious, and a long wretched sobriety followed it. No second expedition was attempted, and the courts of the Escorial were filled with the flying princes of Ireland, as were, a hundred years later, the courts of Versailles. Most of them lived at both, wretchedly, and died as beggars; only two names have survived, and the old splendour illumines them. There is the celebrated Tyrconnel race of the O'Donnells, which is distinguished by high dignities at the Spanish court; and in France the race of the Mac Mahons, specially celebrated through the patriotic Bishop of Clogher (who in the rebellion of 1641, exchanging the cross for the sword, led the army of Ulster), and whose youngest son received from Ireland a sword of honour after the battle of Magenta.

There is no doubt that the trade between Galway and Spain was once very extensive and important. The Spanish style of many of the fine houses that now lie in ruins, the traditions and authentic documents prove that Galway in old times was a very rich, active, jolly, splendour-loving city. There is no doubt either that many Spanish merchants lived in Galway and intermarried with the natives, and that the descendants of these southern connexions are to be found among the dark-eyed foreign faces in the fish-market, among the herring-casks and coarse nets.

Not only in the main street, but in all side lanes and alleys, there are the grandest remains of old haughty

architectural buildings, which form the most striking contrast to the life they surround. A splendid arch, with marble figures, leads into a damp court, full of sherds and piles of filth. Pigs revel in a hall which displays a broad flight of steps of fine workmanship. Buildings whose walls bear the arms of haughty tribes are inhabited by cobblers; others stand desolate, with nailed-up doors, and are rotting away in the continual dampness. High store-houses on the water-side, once, perhaps, full of gallons of fiery southern wines, stand gloomily, with decaying doors and rain-eaten shutters. On the stone steps, slippery with mud, under the large portals of houses sinking above them, lay half-naked children. And the murmur of the ocean which accompanies this sight, assumed for a moment the melody from Beethoven's "Ruins of Athens," where the pasha fastens his horses to a pillar and lets them eat out of a marble sarcophagus. I was in Ireland, the land of wretchedness and ruins, but here, for the first time, the poetry of ruins met me in the midst of the wretchedness; and in these streets, so strange, so sad, so fairy-like in themselves, the women, with their gay-coloured dresses, their naked legs, and black eyes—a fantastic medley of Hispano-Moorish reminiscences—English shops and Irish cabins, sailing-boats along the quays, American traders and steamers out at sea, and among them the Irish-speaking people; and not a day's journey away in the mouth of the bay, Arranmore, "loud Arranmore," and the enchanted island! Present and past, romantic poetry and ugly reality, pride and humiliation, majesty and ruin, are here mingled in the streets, as they are in the veins of the people that walk and dwell in them—southern Romanic blood with northern Celtic and Anglo-Norman

blood. Black eyes and golden hair are by no means a rarity in the fish-market of Galway. If you wish for contradictions, come to Galway; if you want riddles, and legends, and primeval stories, and songs, and customs, to be found nowhere else, come to the Bay! Most of the faces have something decidedly southern—oval shape, long noses, dark eyes, and black hair; southern garments, gay and striking, but torn and ragged. The women and girls wear red petticoats which descend to their ankles, the rest is naked. The hair is shorn close round the head, and hangs down the back; over this they throw a cloak—the remnant of the Spanish mantilla—blue cloaks, black cloaks, often crimson cloaks, picturesquely folded over the head and fastened under the chin. The dark, expressive faces gain by this covering a peculiarity, and, even if not handsome, they are all enthralling and full of fiery life.

At the end of the city, on the quays, with the Claddagh opposite, is the fish-market of Galway. The place is called Spanish Parade, and an island lying out in the harbour is known as Madeira. A remnant of the city wall, with a haughty Gothic arch, borders Spanish Parade on the city side. In one of these splendid arched portals a blacksmith has taken up his abode, and through the darkness ever prevailing in this dungeon glistens the flame, and the sparks crackle round the head of the Galway Cyclops. The market in front was full of blue cloaks, lying behind the casks and selling shell-fish, and of red petticoats, walking among them. The younger women, with the cloaks draped round their heads, looked often piquant enough; their faces had not unfrequently the sweetest expression of passion, and their lips pouted charmingly. The old fisher-wives, on

the other hand, who sat near the casks and smoked damp tobacco in short clay pipes, had something witch-like and menacing about them. I did not hear a single English word here: the customers were country-folk, the dwellers in the surrounding bogs, and the sellers were the women of the Claddagh—nothing but Irish blood. The men of the Claddagh go out to sea and fish, and lounge about, the lazzaroni of the West, on the other side of the bay, when they have returned from fishing. These cabin aristocrats do not trouble themselves with trade. The Claddagh and the coast sea are their world: they know nothing beyond them. The rotting boat, the crumbling cabin are their abode—everything else they despise. They call every man who does not belong to their community a stranger; even a man from the next parish is a stranger; and it is their rule not to intermarry with strangers. They do not go beyond their limitations, but they adhere to them. No political wretchedness, no penal code, no starvation has expelled them; but they have spurned every connexion with Danes, Saxons, and Normans; they have not even married over in Galway, or suffered any admixture with the foreign Spanish element.

Hence there is nothing in the features of the Claddagh men which evokes recollections of the Spaniards as there is among the others. The women never wear red cloaks; and while the peasantry round Galway wear scarlet petticoats, blue is the Claddagh colour. They have for a long time kept up a species of fisher monarchy, and even to this day select, on the eve of St. John, their "Claddagh King," who settles the disputes among his subjects, and whose boat bears a white flag as a distinguishing mark. A large procession, composed of rude masks, followed by

a dance round the bonfire, announces the commencement of his reign. Still, during the last ten years many of their old customs have been altered, and they are not so particular about marrying as they used to be; so Mr. Morris told me. Their names, however, are still thoroughly Irish; and though you fancy you notice every now and then one that sounds English or Welsh, a Spanish one, as is so frequently the case in Galway, is never noticed. As there are so many of the same name in the Claddagh, they are distinguished by the title of some sort of fish. Thus there is, "Paddy the Salmon," "Paddy the Whale," and "Paddy the Sprat." They can nearly all speak English, or at least understand it; but among themselves they will not on any consideration employ a Sassenach word.

I heard nothing about peculiar songs, whose existence might be presupposed among so isolated a race, which stands in such intimate connexion with the sea; their whole poetic store—and it is of extraordinary depth and fulness—consists in a series of fabulous traditions, which populate the whole sea-coast with fantastic creatures. Their songs, however, are the same as we find spread over the whole of the west. They are said to sing them very charmingly, and their dances are celebrated throughout Ireland. Like all Celts, they love showy clothes and bright colours. In addition to the short blue cloak, by which the Claddagh woman may be recognised, she wears a red petticoat, in sunshine a gay handkerchief round her head, in rainy weather a sheet over the blue cloak. There are no braver men on the sea than the Claddagh fishers, when they set sail with the priestly blessing and consecrated salt and ashes aboard; but on land they are very retiring and timid;

they cannot endure the sight of fire-arms, and are no hands at boxing. It is said that half a dozen constables can put to flight ten thousand Claddagh fishermen. This is remarkable enough with a class of men who expose their lives day after day on the dangerous element, and must wrestle for existence with every wave. I saw the same thing, however, at Heligoland. A stout fellow, who assuredly never trembled at the thundering sea, ran away from a pig, which, I allow, he had never seen before, as there are none on the island.

The Claddagh fishermen are marvellously superstitious, and there are a hundred things which predict good or ill fortune. They have their lucky and unlucky days, and woe to them who put to sea on an unfavourable morning! Formerly they would not have begun fishing had not the priest sailed with them, and uttered his blessing over the bay; the boat with the padre sailing in front of all the rest. Even now, no boat goes to sea without oaten cake, salt, and ashes. They believe that there is a peculiar blessing in these three things; for all that has gone through fire, they say is holy. Most superstitious are they with respect to the prophetic qualities of certain animals. If a crow flies over their boat and croaks, that is a good sign, for the crow says, "Fish I bring you—fish I bring you!" But so great is their fear of a fox, hare, or rabbit, that they never utter the names of those animals, or like to hear them spoken by others. If a Claddagh fisher has seen one of them, or heard its name mentioned, he does not dare go to sea that day; and yet they do not know the reason of this strange superstition. The fear of a hare is found throughout Ireland, however, and dates from the oldest times. "If on the first of May," Camden says, "they find a hare

among their cattle, they do not rest till they have killed it, because they believe that it is an old witch who has designs on the butter." It is a widely spread superstition that witches had the power to convert themselves into hares, and that if they sucked a cow, it lost its milk, which they, the witches, had in their own churn for twelve months. On the sea-coast the omen refers to a bad haul or some accident at sea, and the following amusing story is told on the subject in Galway :

Near the Claddagh lived an honest butcher, who profited by the superstition of his neighbours. They, namely, never go fishing on a Saturday, because they are afraid that some accident might keep them out till Sunday, and that day they keep most holy. Hence, Friday is their great fishing day, and a good haul on that day has the natural result of reducing the price of meat considerably at the Saturday market. The butcher, whose trade was often injured in this way, formed a plan, which worked famously till he was detected. He procured a fox, or, as some say, a stuffed skin, and paraded it every Friday on the road by which the Claddagh fishermen went down to the sea. The sight produced general consternation and excitement among the fishermen, and never failed in its effect. They did not go to sea on Friday, and the butcher sold his meat at good prices on the following Saturday.

They employ many means, almost of a Pagan character, to bewitch the weather and alter the direction of the wind. In their notions the elements are ruled by powerful spirits, and they build altars, and offer sacrifices to the dark clouds and the menacing wave, as their forefathers probably did, ere St. Patrick converted them into Christians. I was told that, in order to obtain a favourable

wind, they bury a live cat up to the neck in the sand, with its head towards the quarter from which the unfavourable breeze blows, and the poor animal is left to die. At times, too, they build up a pile of stones on the shore, which has a rough likeness with a house or castle and offer it as residence to a spirit, and hope by this to obtain a good wind. But this is a serious action, and the fisher can only do it once in his life; if he repeats it, it proves his certain ruin

When a Claddagh boy loves a girl and wishes to make her an offer, he goes, when the coast is clear, into her cabin and sits down by the hearth opposite his beloved. He does not speak a word, for it is the immutable custom to sit silently. He begins the proceedings by taking sparks from the fire and throwing them at her. In this way she is engaged for some time in shaking off the sparks. If she does not like the lover, she lets him go on quietly, or gets up and walks away from the fire. That is the sign of refusal. If she listens to him, she throws sparks back at the loving enemy. Then the oral proceedings commence, and at last the lover goes to the father of her he has selected, and asks:

“Will you give me your daughter?”

The father answers—and question and answer are said in Irish words which have been employed in the same way for generations.—“May I be choked and drowned, before I marry my daughter, till she marries herself.”

With that the affair is settled and the lovers are betrothed.

If a man be lost at sea and his body is not washed up on the coast, his relations hold the death-watch over the clothes in his house. They then lay them on a bed

and spread a sheet over them, as if the corpse were beneath; they light candles, the crooning woman begins the "caoine," and the men join in with hoarse yells of lamentation. For it is the belief that the ghosts of those whose "caoine" has not been sung are damned and unable to find rest.

A bridge over the harbour leads from Spanish Parade to the Claddagh—a town in itself, such as I never saw before—street after street, side lanes, and alleys full of cabins. The sharp sea-breeze blows through them, and everything smells of salt; stone walls without any plaster covering, in the windows no panes of glass, but wood instead of these—the rough man and rough nature stand here hand in hand on the sea-shore, looking out to sea and deriding the life behind them. There is something excessively daring in this appearance of poverty. Here is no wretchedness, but pride, contempt, and self-confidence. At the same time the geese and pigs walk about the streets. And what pigs! with such long snouts, with ears as stiff and sharp as shirt-collars, with cunning faces and piercing eyes, and they thrust their snouts in everything, and nothing escapes their ears, and when a strange step is heard, they raise their crafty faces, and their piercing eyes are fixed on the intruder—true police eyes, as if they were asking for the passport. Most uncanny beasts are these pigs, whose acquaintance first formed on the Claddagh was fated to grow into an intimacy later, on that great, never-to-be-forgotten day, when my unhappy propensity for "making studies" led me to the Clifden cattle-market, and I—while busily engaged in talking with a western pig-breeder—suddenly remarked that all the noses of his herd were buried in my pocket and journal, and had just begun making gas-

tronomic studies of the leaves of the latter; for the Connaught swine swallow everything that is not placed out of their reach—rags, bones, wood, and leather—and had I not seen them eat earth and stones, it would have been certainly a compliment to me that they even regarded the work of a German traveller as worthy attention.

The Claddagh cabin has a thatched roof; the entrance is simple and gloomy. Near the fire sit mother and children, and the pigs—when they are not outside; on the table near the fire lies the cat. Nor is there any lack of entire rows of ruins; in this respect the Claddagh is thoroughly Irish. Here a door in a ruined cabin fastened with a rope; here door and window filled up with stones. The Irish are very ready to hand with stones; and as their fathers piled up heaps on the graves of their deceased, they now throw fresh ruins, superfluously enough, on every ruin. Then all at once, in the midst of this strange medley, came dark trees and silent walls—the cemetery and the priest's house. These last abodes of peace, which both lie on the frontier between life and death, are everywhere alike; and in the most distant land the solitary wayfarer has a feeling of rest when his eye dwells for a while on the last home of all. Oh, how often I have sat on strange graves, and though unacquainted with those who sleep in them, I have found a consolation which I had long sought vainly. Like a being of a higher order a priest walked along; the women bowed the knee before him, the boys bared their heads, the men lifted their tarry hats. In the street of the Claddagh I saw no men; they were all on the quay or near the sea. Here they lay about on stones; here they leant against doors; here they sat on casks and smoked, idle, muscular forms—true

Neapolitan groups. I walked past them and reached the end. A few more huts, a couple of fishermen, a few geese and pigs, and then a view over the strand meadow and the potato-field of the bay and the flat hill range, which close it in in the distance. Then, nothing further save ships, the grey cloudy sky, and the wind that blew over the broad Atlantic wave.

Two days had passed, and the tumult in our excellent inn had reached its culminating point. All the rooms were occupied by Irish country gentry and their ladies; the stairs were never free from little feet hopping over them, and lovely eyes glistened in the gloom of the corridors. At length the great evening arrived, and the windows of the ball-room were a-blaze. Mr. Morris, too, appeared, in tail-coat and white tie, to fetch me for the festival. He had, beforehand, procured me a tail-coat, or even within sight of the enchanted island it is not allowable to dance without this masterpiece of the clothing art. I could not think of dancing in my coat, however, for it must have been made for the chief of a clan, it was so long and broad. The tails grazed the earth majestically like a train, and the sleeves buried my hands in utter darkness. Nevertheless, Mr. Morris expressed his opinion that it was all right now, and we went, he in first, I behind, with trailing tails and sleeves hanging far over my hands. Noisy music filled the whole house; even when heard at a distance it was full of doubtful passages, and I cannot say that it gained in harmony as we drew nearer to it. There was especially a bugle which behaved with great freedom; it made music on its own account, and went its way, which was not always the right way, careless of the other instruments. This bugle and my coat-tails caused me a great delight on

that evening, and are faithfully connected in my memory with the Galway ball.

The ball-room was tall and spacious; the walls were draped from window to window with green-and-orange cloths and banners, and all the foliage and flowers the late season of the year offered had been collected. Green is the colour of Ireland; and yellow, since the time of William of Orange, has been the colour of the Protestants, the enemies of Ireland. Green and orange were the watchwords of the two camps, and for a hundred years they were opposed to each other. It required many battles and losses on both sides ere green and orange, friendly entwined, could serve as the decoration of the Galway ball-room.

Gradually the room and the niches filled, and green and orange were again displayed in the most varying combinations. In the black locks of the beauties from the wild west, green leaves and yellow flowers were wreathed; green leaves with yellow stripes begirt the elegant waist of many a pretty girl. Yellow dresses with green trimmings appeared among them more and more, till I myself turned green and yellow at the thought of my luckless tails. But Mr. Morris did not leave me at peace long; it was his praiseworthy purpose to introduce me to the prettiest ladies and most notable persons present.

"Here you have," I heard him say, for instance, "one of the O'Kellys, a brave soldier's family, formerly resident in the Wicklow mountains. They were expelled from their estates—by whom I need not tell you—and driven farther and farther, till they found a shelter in the wilds of Connaught. Come, shake worthy O'Kelly's hand.' I obeyed Mr. Morris; I shook worthy O'Kelly's hand, and Mr. Morris continued: "This man here is my neigh-

bour, a rich man with fat pastures and excellent cattle on them, and a man of pure Milesian blood—come and shake worthy O'Connor's hand!" I followed my guide, and shook the offered hand, which in later years had evidently held the ploughshare more frequently than the sword. "And whom have we here?" Mr. Morris then said; "that is one of our old ones—our high sheriff, our Lynch—you must know him;" and off to the "old one," who might be about three-and-thirty, and a handsome, pleasant gentleman. The "old one" was the representative of the celebrated Lynch family, and occupied a position in the city as he did here in the room. He returned my salutation most politely, and said I was heartily welcome, as if he had to do the honours in behalf of his ancestors. Near him stood several of the other "old ones;" among them, Blakes and Athenrys and Skerrets, and after I had shaken all their hands at Mr. Morris's request, the latter said, "And now we will go to the ladies; you would like to do so?" If I liked! At this moment, however, when my heart and my coat-tails were waging a sturdy contest, the trumpet fortunately helped me out of my embarrassment. It invited to dance so energetically, that a healthy confusion soon rendered the ball-room impassable. "Good! we will remain where we are till the dance is over!" Mr. Morris said; and we did so. As I sat and looked at the beauties flashing past me, there was nothing wriggling on the ground behind me which could disturb my beatitude. These Irish are pretty girls, when they fly through decorated ball-rooms, by light and music, in their gay dresses! Little, graceful, fairy-like, and yet so plump, with delicious feet and charming hands—and all in a splendid natural condition in spite of their modern dresses; there is a wild fire and something rebellious in

their glances. Their lips are slightly pouted, their noses *retroussés*; their dark heavy locks wave in the air, and their feet stamp the ground in the national reels. The round full arm is placed on the exquisitely-formed hip, and they trip along and bend their bodies and nod their heads and smile with such consciousness of triumph! Glorious girls these of Galway and the west coast! In addition to reels, they danced quadrilles; but they danced them all with a peculiar fire and passion. I have only seen Hungarian girls dance in a similar way.

Mr. Morris, in the mean while, took all imaginable pains to tell me the names of the dancers, and repeat them till they were imprinted on my memory, as the couples flew past. And there were many proud names, that is certain, and there was no end of the Os and the Macs; and the sons and daughters of all the Irish princes who reigned in this land at the time when Solomon's Temple was building, danced round me. In the mean while a door opened, and a gentleman walked in on whom all eyes were at once fixed: even the trumpet gave one of those flourishes with which it greeted persons of distinction. A smile commenced everywhere, a giggling and putting together of heads, as the gentleman walked across the room with sovereign serenity, and surveyed the blooming row of assembled beauties, and then retired into a nook as if disappointed. For a moment he was the object of interest to all, and I must say that he looked rather strange. He was no longer young, but must still have many youthful impulses. The ends of his neckcloth fluttered over his shoulders, and, at times, touched the points of his moustaches, which also stuck out enormously. His coat stood in an opposite elective affinity to the one I wore on this evening, for it floated about and seemed endowed with elastic wings.

At the same time his boots crackled and his chain ornaments tinkled. In short, all about him was music, movement, and flutter, and his ball costume was possessed of angelic qualities. This was the man who, for a while, put the ball company of the Irish west in good humour, and Mr. Morris especially, on seeing him, gave way to such an outburst of laughter as I did not consider him capable of. But Falstaff had the enviable faculty of not only being witty himself, but making those witty with whom he had dealings. And "Come with me," my friend said, and laughed as I had rarely seen him laugh—"come with me, and I will tell you a story about that person."

English reader, I will not repeat my friend's story here. When I tell you that the mysterious stranger was the celebrated Mr. Carden, you will know all about him.

Mr. Morris finished his story, and I emptied the bottle at the same time. We returned to the door of the ball-room and looked in; my eyes sought Mr. Carden, but found something very different. They rested on a graceful, noble-looking young lady, with a delicate pale face and dark eyes, and by her side another, who was all fire and beauty, darker than all, more piquant, more brilliant, attired in a white dress, with green garlands and orange-coloured head ornament.

"One of them is Miss O'Keane, of Castle Connell," I said, delighted at the rencontre; "but who is the other, the blooming one, who flashes beauty around her?"

Mr. Morris had drunk quickly, but my dithyrambic had attracted his attention. He looked at me in surprise, was about to answer, was about to question, but, ere he could do either, I had hurried away to the other end of the ball-room. Behind me, my coat-tails waggled in melan-

choly mood, and my sleeves were turned up. Many eyes were fixed on me. "A foreigner!" was whispered from group to group, and they fancied that a coat with trailing tails and turned-up sleeves was the usual ball costume in Germany. But I, caring nought for looks or opinion, had already walked up to Miss O'Keane and shook her hand. The trumpet, too, mixed itself up in our scene of recognition at the right moment, and made some not quite successful attempts to compensate us for the absence of the music of the spheres. Fortunately, Miss O'Keane was so pleased at the unexpected meeting, that my coat was not discovered, and the other young lady, whose glance was already taking a direction highly undesired by me, was led to other thoughts by her companion's cry:

"This is the foreign gentleman who brought us a message from my brother. This is Miss Kathleen O'Flaherty," the Castle Connell lady said; "Wild Kate, my best friend."

Wild Kate looked up, and were there a black sun, I would compare her eye to it. But there is none, and so there is nothing in the world with which I can compare Miss O'Flaherty's eye.

Wild Kate, however, said: "If you come higher up in the mountains and lose your way to Letterfrack, you will be welcome, sir."

Miss O'Keane laughed and said: "My Wild Kate is a dangerous being, and springs from a dangerous race. Do you not know the O'Flahertys? Are you not aware that the good citizens of Galway put up over the gate that led to the west, 'God protect us from the wild O'Flahertys,' and that they shut the gate when it was said that the O'Flahertys were approaching?"

"But you must know too," Kathleen added, with a

bright glance, "that in later years we have become more peaceful, and industrious, and learned, and carry on no war, and have no feuds, but till the ground and look after the sheep, and in the leisure hours read the Ogygia of my most learned great-great-great-grandfather. Only come to Letterfrack and you shall see for yourself."

When I joined Mr. Morris again, I found him in the most select company, round a table in a side-room, which was covered with port wine and champagne bottles, and half-filled glasses which were never empty, and round them were the "worthies," and the "braves," and the "old ones," who had all taken an oath against dancing, and surrendered to the sweet enjoyment of wine. And the glasses clinked, and the heads grew heated, and the throats were rather hoarse, but, for all that, they sang till not even the trumpet could be heard, and I, after coat-tails and sleeves had received a hearty greeting, joined merrily in an Irish glee, of which I remember just one verse:

Orange and green will carry the day!

Orange, orange,

Green and orange!

Wear them together o'er mountain and bay!

Orange and green!

Our king and our queen!

Orange and green will carry the day!

CHAPTER XIV.

BIANCONI'S CARS—THE HORSE-DEALERS—OUGHTERARD—CONNAMARA CABINS—RECESS HOTEL—CLIFDEN—THE FAIR—MEN AND ANIMALS—LETTERFRACK—WILD KITTY—PETER CONNELLAN—DIAMOND HILL—DARBY THE PIPER—THE PEASANT WEDDING—QUAINT CUSTOMS—THE MARRIAGE—LOUGHY FADAGHAN—THE FIRST KISS—THE RACE FOR THE BOTTLE—THE RINCAPADA—THROWING THE STOCKING.

“To hell or Connaught!” was once the cry in every rebellion, every outbreak, every massacre, when the English were tired of murdering, or earth and water had no more room for the corpses. Cromwell’s soldiers gave the plundered families their choice, and in the wars which William III. waged against the expelled Stuart and Catholicism, it was the battle-cry. Here the sword and there the desert! and with the cry of agony, “To Connaught!” the survivors fled to the desert. Since that time the wild west, with its heath and swamp, has become the last asylum of Irish Celtism; and here are found, recognisable by their haughty names, the descendants of old Irish kings and nobles, as peasants and beggars. The wild west, with its endless marshes, its stony hill chains, its pale lakes and solitary deserted villages, is one of the most melancholy districts in the world; the sea rolls savagely and sadly along the flat rocky shore; the wind wanders monotonously and gloomily over the heath, and

accompanies the wayfarer as far as he goes. Clay holes are visible close to the way, or away in the bog: miserable half-naked men crawl out of them when they hear the rolling of a carriage; no green field, no tree so far as the eye reaches, nothing but solitude, stones, misery, and rags. Such is the wild west of Ireland whither we are proceeding.

The only conveyance here is Bianconi's royal cars. Carlo Bianconi is an Italian; when he came to Ireland some forty years ago, he was a poor lad hawking engravings. At that time there was no mode of progression at all in the west, and no one thought it were possible to establish postal communication here. Bianconi made the attempt, gave up his engraving trade, and began with one car and two horses. The experiment was so successful, that Bianconi is now the richest man in Tipperary, and his cars enliven the west in the literal sense of the term. But they play a melancholy part in my recollections: the remembrance of wet from morn till night, of cold and discomfort, of bad company, frostbitten noses, and miserable tobacco, is ever connected with them. The Athlone coffin was a state carriage when compared with Bianconi's cars; they are long, low vehicles, with seats on both sides, at times with boards for the feet, at times without, and in the latter case the feet are in a most muddy vicinity with the wheels; no roof shelters the nodding heads of the passengers, the rain pours down on them and collects in the centre in the vacancies between their boxes and bags, like miniature lakes. A shabby leather, which is too narrow to cover the feet, and too short to spread along the whole bench, is a constant source of dispute to the travellers, and this generally affords the only source of amusement offered them. The car is drawn by

two horses, which often sink in the boggy ground, and driven by a coachman, who sits up atop, motionless in his frieze cloak, and from whom nothing is heard, save now and then a cheering word for his horses, or a curse when beggars crawl up. The desert he traverses every day anew, without ever coming to an end, has rendered him harsh and misanthropic. Such are Bianconi's cars: no vehicle in the world will ever render me desperate again, since I have sat in them. Even the conveyance in which we shall all some day be carried to our rest, and, as we trust, to salvation, appears to me less terrible when I think of Bianconi's cars.

It was about one o'clock when I seated myself, at Galway, on one of these "royal cars." It is the accursed irony of fate, that, after the Majesty of Ireland has long been buried, and her princely race beg by the wayside, these wretched inns and abominable cars are the last things with the royal name! The clouds were heavy and low, a gloomy, hopeless autumn feeling brooded over everything. It was one of those days when a man prefers to sit by the fireside, waiting for the yellow twilight to bring light and warmth. I was proceeding, however, towards the wild heathery highlands, wrapped in my plaid; I sat in the corner under the driver, who was high enthroned in his white cloak with a horn by his side. In the centre, near and among the piled-up luggage, sat a man in a long cloak with brass fastenings, on an overturned chest. Opposite him, an old rogue was seated on a carpet-bag. By me sat three men, one old and two young, horse-dealers by trade, and going to Clifden market. They were good-tempered horse-dealers, that I must say in their favour. They truly pitied me, as I sat there so wretched and sad, and thought that I must have pressing business to

go west at such a bad season. One first said that I wanted to buy horses at Clifden, but the other whispered him—though I heard it—that he could see I was a gentleman and no horse-dealer. I must be a stranger too, for I seemed to be very cold, and certainly not accustomed to such weather. Thus they spoke, and left me the greater part of the leather to cover me.

On the other seats, with their backs towards us, sat four more people, wrapped up in oilskin caps and cloaks, and at the first station where we stopped, a man in a plaid cap clambered up to the driver's side. Apple-peel, and things which are much unpleasanter to the person they strike, flew out from the centre of the car, or over the heads of the side passengers. At every hill we came to—and there are hills enough in the west of Ireland—a part of the company had to get down and walk. The good-tempered horse-dealers insisted that I should remain seated. At one moment a plank was lost which must be looked for again, while the car stopped in the rain on the desolate acclivity; then a hat flew off in the wind, and the passengers must hunt it over the heath till they caught it. It was, in truth, a splendid journey, and a ridicule to everything that is called European civilisation.

It rained as we lost sight of Galway's towers, and it was long ere it left off again. For a while we proceeded under dripping trees; then we had the heath before us, and naked stone walls bordered the road. It is a peculiarity of the Irishman to build walls round everything; he piles up stones without purpose or mortar, as if he had an irresistible impulse to work, and lacked the opportunity for anything better. Walls round forests and meadows; walls round bogs and ruins; walls round

rocks—just as the inhabitant of the Schleswig-Holstein marshes raises pleasant leafy hedges round every field of his flourishing farm. The wretched Irishman builds walls round places where neither man nor animal can ever feel an inclination to enter; he builds walls round deserts where nothing is to be found save a red morass, in which you would sink knee-deep, and black stagnating water, which exhales a pestiferous odour.

Between the heaps of stone and the red marsh covered with but scanty sheep fodder, were here and there deserted cabins: several times we passed entire villages that lay in ruins, and were inhabited by no living soul. Oh, it was a melancholy journey in the heavy rain upon an open car—the sky so grey, the land so black, so deadly silent, and nothing to break the silence but the wind which moaned from the hills, the creaking of our wheels, and the croaking of a few rooks, that slowly disappeared in the heaving mist.

On our right we had Lough Corrib, a large lake, which stretches nearly through Connaught, and whose upper end almost joins Lough Mask. At one moment it was hidden by rising ground, then appeared again, a long pale stripe, which glistened sadly in the mournful landscape and the sickly daylight. The sky grew slightly clearer when we came under the tall dark trees of the estates which once belonged to Martin of Ballynahinch. They extended for forty miles along the shores of the lake, and were bought by a London society. Then came a wide prospect over the lake, with its numerous islets, which, overgrown with dark foliage, rose from the dull surface of the water. The lake looked like a magic garden. When I asked the driver how many of these islands there might be, he answered very simply that he

had never counted them, but it was believed there were as many as there were days in the year. Opposite, a dark ruin, the tower of Aghnanure Castle, stood out from the background of the cloudy sky.

The short livid sunshine had disappeared, when we reached the village of Oughterard. We stopped for a moment, and a strange crowd collected round us. Women appeared, selling withered fruit, and boys wishful to dispose of specimens of the marble found in the neighbourhood, and beggars and constables, who had come across the moor, and for a while sought shelter from the rain behind our car, and a man who had a jockey boot on one leg while the other was bare. After a short rest we rolled through the row of cabins. At the end stands a little cheerful house, with green shutters, and a carefully tended garden in front.

“The doctor of Oughterard,” White-cloak said, “and those are his daughters.”

Two girls, one of whom was about eighteen and the other a child, stood, with handkerchiefs over their heads, in the rain under the trees. To watch this car go by daily was the sole amusement of their lives. They saw me sitting sadly in my corner as the car passed their garden gate. They probably conjectured that this parting glance at quiet happy comfort in the midst of a miserable autumn and heath landscape must do my soul good, for they waved their white handkerchiefs to me. I felt as if I were bidding good-by to society, and heard a farewell greeting in the breeze. For a long time I could not forget this salutation; and when I looked back from the top of the hill, the two girls still stood there under the trees in the rain.

The country grew wilder, the sky ever darker. The

rain fell constantly ; then an unbounded solitude—the heath so immense—the rain so grey, so wretched, as if it would never leave off—the storm so gloomy, so complaining. Only rarely red-gowned women on donkeys passed, or lay in low carts, like dream forms, that have no feeling for the severity of the weather. The monotony at length grew horrifying. The cabins became rarer, and when they appeared in a swamp, they were holes without windows, or even chimneys. Light, air, men, and pigs had their entrance through the door ; and the smoke, which tried to escape through its cracks, was driven back by wind and rain. Never before had I seen human beings living in such dens. I believe that the Red Skins live better. More healthily, I am certain ; for what a mouldering smell must reign in these clay walls, ever gnawn through by damp, under this constantly dripping straw roof, in this atmosphere without light or warmth, but full of smoke and injurious exhalations from the collected persons and animals.

It is impossible to give the reader even an approximative idea of the varieties of wretchedness which presented themselves to the passer-by in these cabins. The best of them consisted of carelessly built stone walls, filled up with clay ; a low hole as a window ; a wooden door, corroded by rain and covered with soot ; and a roof of thatch or sods, with stones on them to protect them against the attacks of the wind. In the worst description, there was a hole in the roof for a window. The stones were loosely thrown together, as among us the pebbles on the highway-side : they lay as if chance, and not the arranging hand of man, had piled them up ; no clay stopped up the holes open to wind and rain ; and the worst tenements no longer even resemble cabins, not even stalls for

cattle, but caves, which wild animals had hollowed in the ground. I remember one such unnatural abode, consisting of a hole dug out of a mound, and the entrance covered by a leant-to board, behind bush-work. Another den was formed between enormous boulders, which nature had arranged so as to produce a cavity ; so that it may be literally asserted that a portion of the Irish western population live in and under the earth.

All solitary stood here and there by the wayside a rather better house, offering "entertainment for man and horse," and I fear it would have been bad entertainment for both, had they ever seen anything better than an Irish bog. At last, even these entertainments disappeared ; the ruins ever grew rarer ; only lakes glistened on either side of the road. High and mighty, with their summits in the clouds, and with fog gloomily collected in their valleys, rose the Maam Turk and the Bene-Beola Mountains, with their "twelve pins," and soon threw their mysterious shadow over us. Our road ran along close to the lake. We could not see it for the fog, but we heard it breaking on the rocky shore. Presently we halted at the half-way house.

The other passengers entered the inn, a low cabin, which stood wretchedly on a hill by the wayside, and they steamed with damp grog when they took their seats again. Presently, we entered Connamara, the most mountainous portion of the Irish west coast. The mountains drew closer and closer ; enormous masses, with misty outlines, as if Ossa were piled on Olympus. At the centre of the heath we came to a cabin, which, in the twilight, looked like a smoking dung-heap. All was a damp piled-up mass of clay and straw, from whose top smoke and sparks poured forth. I should not have be-

lieved that human beings could live in it, had not curious people crawled out on the approach of our car, and stood gaping after us. In the mean while night fell, and the scene became with each moment more gloomy and uncomfortable. Tethered goats, with their long beards, got up as our car came up. Oxen, with broad foreheads and strangely curved horns, wandered over the heath. Black before us lay the marshy ground, and fancy made long wanderings through its turf palaces. Waterfalls poured from the mountains; mighty cataracts fell perpendicularly, and dashed over the boulders; here everything formed a medley mass—the trembling bog, the stone blocks on it, the lakes, the islands, the waterfalls—all were inextricably confounded. The world seemed here to be lost in chaos—in that pre-historic fog ere time had commenced, and the separation was not yet completed—and the grey, gloomy, broad mist brooded over the slothful elements.

After six miles of such a journey—miles of shuddering uninterrupted solitude—we had a short glance of light and fire, and a decent meal at Recess Hotel, a little off the road under the mountains, and then we drove six more miles through ravines which twice rose perpendicularly and sank again as suddenly, so that the travellers had to leave the car and wade after it. For miles we saw no human being, and no cabin. Only one cart with goods, which seemed afraid to go alone, had joined us, and the monotonous sound of its wheels followed us. When the first lights again gleamed, and though they came from wretched cabins, my heart welcomed them as stars of hope, and Clifden, which we reached a little before midnight, appeared to it a haven.

Even here, in spite of the advanced hour and the incessant

rain, the rolling of our car attracted some curious heads to doors and windows, and in Carr's Hotel an enormous fire in the coffee-room most hospitably welcomed us. White-cloak and his mates, the good-tempered horse-dealers, sought another shelter, and I was left alone in front of the huge fire. How I enjoyed my tea that night I cannot describe, nor how polite, almost affectionate I was to the sleepy boots.

Clifden is quite a new town, only dating from 1809; but, for all that, it has not escaped the general fate that hangs over Ireland. This town looks so worn, so faded! and it has its ruins too, as well as all other Irish towns which have been built hundreds of years. At the same time its position is exceptionally lovely. In the east stand mountains with their numerous picturesquely pointed summits in the ether. On the other side you survey the bay, whose quiet blue is only broken by a fine strip of foam, indicating the rocks beneath, and by boats which lie fastened to the quay.

The town runs along between the hills and the bay in two parallel streets. In many of the houses trade is carried on, principally in woollen wares, but naturally, too, in all sorts of provisions, with which this town supplies the scanty neighbourhood. On most of the shopboards I noticed names of unmingled Irish origin: the most frequent were Joyce and O'Flaherty. High above the town, on the hill range, stand several handsome buildings; one of them is "the church," that is, the Protestant building for worship. The whole country is Catholic, and only a few Protestant families inhabit the town; I heard say five, but these are the richest and most powerful, and have built their God's house on the highest pinnacle of the hill, whence it commands town and sea. A few years

later there appeared on the opposite mountain another solitary edifice with many small windows, which looked towards the Connamara wilderness and the mountains which protect it. This wilderness, with its mountains, is the seat of fanatic Catholicism—the district of which Cardinal Wiseman said that its inhabitants were often ridiculed because they lived in mud-hovels on a swamp; but that frequently, when the last spark had expired in the peat-fire on the hearth, when the storm howled round them, the rain forced through crack and crevice—that frequently there was a brighter light in these wretched cabins to console the deserted inmates than the dazzling lustre of a palace could offer. That is the neighbourhood; and the edifice at Clifden, looking out on it, is a nunnery which, during my visit, sheltered eighteen sisters. It is the crying disproportion in this country that the native mass of the population belongs to the Catholic faith, while Anglican Protestantism is established as the state religion. The pressure of this contradiction is felt by the majority of the people, and the home of Catholicism is the home of wretchedness in Ireland.

I saw Clifden in the purest sunlight, for the rain had rained itself out the previous day. I also saw it in no slight excitement, for, as I said, there was a horse-fair, and the horse-fairs of Clifden are celebrated in the west, and holidays for the town. From an early hour the squares and streets began to fill, on the roads winding down the hills glistened the red petticoats of the Connamara peasants, and oxen, pigs, and donkeys marched before them in affectionate flocks. The fish-market had already begun on the bay. Heavy baskets piled up with soles, hung on the backs of donkeys lost in patient contemplation, or were packed in small carts; other baskets

full of lobsters stood on the ground, and between them women with red petticoats and gay head-cloths. The fishwives all over the world are alike in one respect, that they are not very good-looking; I rarely saw a young one among them. The men had naturally their Sunday clothes on; the most remarkable fact to me was that they nearly all wore round caps with a button atop and plaid brims. But this time the cattle interested me most, which appeared in the company of the men. Here were the pigs once more, my good acquaintances from the Claddagh. They walked up and down past me, or between my legs, as if they had known me for years, and had the right to bully me. They all had the old-looking sharp head, and were impudently familiar. You can see from their conduct that they live in the cabins with their masters; indeed, in Connaught, humans and animals have become very much alike. The men in their rags and tatters, and dung-heap abodes, have assumed something of the animal, and the animals, for their part, have advanced somewhat beyond their natural frontier through their constant association with men. This is specially the case with the pigs, which form the most important element of the Connaught household. You can distinctly notice their faulty education, and they have all the vices such is wont to produce. They are pressing and curious, and sniffed round my knees, as I sat on a stone in front of the inn. One even thrust its snout into my note-book as if curious to read what I wrote about it, and it offered to bite me when I tried to drive it away.

The donkeys also attracted my attention. They were much more cunning than their general reputation in the rest of Europe allowed them to be. They were much livelier than their civilised brethren, and a sort of

fire and ambition flashed in their eyes. Two of them stood before me, freed from their fish panniers, and enjoying the fresh morning sun. In the first place, they hailed the golden light with those natural sounds which are universally regarded as not the sweetest the kingdom of tones offers. But here it was truly fearful; even the fishwives were disturbed by it in their gossip, and beat the musicians with a stick. The latter, however, must have regarded this in the light of applause, for they continued their duet with increased intensity. Then the noble pair looked at each other, and began most affectionately sniffing at one another. For some time I was in the erroneous idea that this was an interchange of feeling, but the donkeys of Connamara are selfish creatures, and ere long one of them raised its head and laid it on the torn saddle of the other, where it began tearing out and eating the old straw with which it was lined. This time, however, the fishwife made a use of her stick, about the nature of which Master Neddy could no longer be mistaken. It felt that this was in no way meant for an evidence of applause, and resigned himself with a look whose expression was beyond all description world-contemning. In the midst of these donkeys, pigs, carts, and fishwives, stood a vehicle which remained mysteriously covered till mid-day; but from the strange faces that at times looked out from behind the canvas, and the respect the passing sons and daughters of the heath paid to the mysterious vehicle, I came to the conclusion that it was nothing less than a panorama or puppet-show.

I did not wait till the cart was uncovered, for I had hired a pony-chaise and Gilligan to drive it. The western highlands lay before me, and I longed to employ the last sinking days of autumn in an excursion through

them. It is true that Gilligan, the cautious one, observed that it rained at least once every day in the highlands, and I am sorry to say I presently learned he was right; but my heart protested, and my eye roved with delight over the sweet soft hues of the mountains, which the damp, still glistening on them, only rendered softer. Never again have I enjoyed such a sight as I had at times in that late damp autumn among the western highlands of Connaught.

Just behind Clifden the landscape became very fine; the road rises and the mountains open. Under us, to the left, were the bays, which the sea has torn here so frequently out of the mountain; the water glistened with a wondrously dark blue hue, and small white waves lazily rolled against the coast and then retired. To the right and in front of us rose the twelve peaks of the Bena-Beola Mountain, which the English, with their usual neglect of everything Irish, have converted into the twelve pins (pin, corruption of Ben), and their purple drew gloriously grand lines athwart the light azure of the sky. Through the open ravines fell the broad gold of the sunshine, and was reflected on the tranquil sea far away on the horizon.

On this day the country was more animated than usual. Flocks of country people, proceeding to Clifden fair, came down the mountains. In all the gaps the red petticoats shone and the gay head-cloths fluttered. I saw in this short day more lovely faces, more powerful forms, and more picturesque groups, than I believe I saw during the whole of my Irish tour. So great is the beauty and strength of the Connamara peasants, that even the unheard-of misery they have endured since time immemorial, and still suffer in their wretched cabins, has not

been able to destroy these qualities. In rain and storm, I grant, the unpleasant side is turned outwards, and you only see their nakedness and want. But let the morning sun shine over them, and let the pleasant blue of their mountains surround them, then their graceful, voluptuous limbs are extended, the black hair is loosed, and the brown eyes speak the language which the heart understands in all regions, and does not forget even in the utmost woe and the utter disfavour of existence. How many pictures of rich scenery and of peasants presented themselves to me this morning! It was a panorama in which you walk from glass to glass, to something ever fresh and ever more beautiful. The brown girls came down the hill-sides in flocks, carrying their shoes and stockings in their hands. Then they sat down by the waterfall by the wayside. They placed their pretty feet in the water and washed them. Then they left it to the sun to dry and warm them. After which, the innocent children of the highlands put on their shoes and stockings, smoothed their hair, looked at their faces in the water mirror, and walked contentedly towards the delights of the fair.

And far on our journey, wherever there was water with a sunny patch of meadow near it, we saw similar groups in their gay dress, not unlike the fairy beings with whom fancy populates every mountain stream. All at once I came to a scene which reminded me of dream-land. I had passed round the last spur of the hill, and expected new mountains, new heaths, new wildernesses. Instead of that, I stood suddenly, as if by magic, in the most delightful garden, in the pleasantest idyl, such as poets only dream, and legends describe. Almost a thousand feet above the sea, between lofty mountains, and

after a tour through brown foggy mist-land, full of gloomy mud-hovels, in which misery and hunger dwell, the wayfarer, little suspecting it, suddenly finds himself surrounded by delicious small houses, like English cottages in flowery gardens. Balconies of green Connamara marble stand over the doors, and everything smells of mignonette. Gentle green hills limit the view on the land side; on the other, ocean stretches out for an immeasurable distance, and between both in the happy centre are the houses of this pretty village, and all produces the deepest effect of piety and morality. No beggars follow the new arrival; all the people who are visible seem happy and well to do, and neatly-dressed children play in the sunshine of the broad street.

I still stood all amazement, and scarcely dared to believe my eyes; at this moment a delicate lad, whose blooming face and curly hair were overshadowed by a broad-brimmed felt hat, came riding down the hill-side on a pony.

“Can you tell me, my lad,” I asked the boy, who was apparently sixteen years of age, “where I am?”

“Oh, sir,” his melodious voice answered, “you are at Letterfrack.”

“Letterfrack!” I exclaimed in delight, for I remembered Miss O’Flaherty and the Galway ball.

Suddenly the lad doffed his hat with a loud laugh, and I recognised the eyes, and the rosy lips, and the curls, and the exquisite feet, and it was Wild Kate herself, dressed in boy’s clothes, who offered me her hand, and squeezed mine heartily, saying, “Welcome to Letterfrack!” and by her side I walked to one of the neat houses by the roadside, and Kathleen’s father and mother

came to meet me, and also told me I was heartily welcome, and laughed all over their good-tempered faces when Kathleen told them I had not recognised her.

"Yes," said Mr. O'Flaherty, a worthy gentleman of about forty, "my Kathleen will never alter. When she wanders about the mountains, she will wear boy's clothes, and I was obliged to have them made for her, whether I would or no."

"A naughty girl!" the mother said, as she pressed her daughter's curly head to her bosom, and kissed her pure forehead gently.

On which my astonished driver learned that he could go back to Clifden, and I was shown to a sunny front room with a full view of the bright blue sea. For hours I could have sat there listening to what the wild waves were saying, but Wild Kitty left me no time for dreaming, no rest; she had a thousand new things to show me, and I must wander about the mountains of her home with her. She knew every lovely spot around, and was never wearied of leading me from one to the other. She visited with me the cabins of the peasants, and I soon found what a lovely angel I had as a guide in the faces beaming with love and gratitude with which the poor mountaineers welcomed her. And when I thought of the desolate heaths I had passed over, I could not help repeating after Thackeray, but very softly, lest she might hear it, "I believe that the angels are not all in heaven."

I spent many happy days with the good people of Letterfrack. One morning, a peasant came down from the mountains, with a deeply furrowed face and scanty hair growing over it, and with brown eyes, which, in spite

of age, still possessed brilliancy and good humour. This man carried a mighty shillelah in his hand, his clothes were clean and tidy, and modest was his rap at the front door.

"Oh," Wild Kate said, "that is my old Peter Connellan." She ran out and brought the old man in, who had thrust his cap into his trousers-pocket, and made several awkward bows behind his big stick. Father and mother seemed well acquainted with him, and he must sit down and take a glass of whisky, and Wild Kate took his stick, which she brought to me, saying, "Look, with this shillelah old Peter broke many a head when he was young Peter still, and he must then have been as fine a boy as any in Ireland."

Old Peter nodded his head, and tears of joy filled his eyes, and he wiped them with his cuff, for his left hand was now filled with a hunch of cake.

"And how are you up in the mountains?" Mr. O'Flaherty asked, presently.

"All well, sir," the old man answered, "the Virgin be praised! Old Peter brings pleasant news to day."

"Then he is doubly welcome," my worthy host said. "What's doing with you there?"

"A marriage," Peter said, as he put the whisky-glass on the table, and got up.

"A marriage!" Wild Kate cried. "Hallo! I like to hear that—I am very fond of weddings. And who's going to be married, old Peter?"

"My daughter Judy, by your leave. And as you have so often visited my house, dear miss, when there was sickness and sorrow in it, I would ask you to visit me this time, when we are going to be jolly—and your parents too."

“And this man also?” Kitty asked, pointing at me, as if we were in a menagerie, and I were the untamed visitor from some fearfully remote region.

“Also,” old Peter said, and looked at me, as if he really took me for a wild beast, or something of that sort—“also.” He then overcame his hesitation and offered me his hand, appearing no little amazed that I shook it just as other men had hitherto done.

In short, the invitation was accepted, and two days later we started for the mountains. Wild Kitty had donned her boy’s dress again; “it’s easier for dancing and climbing,” she said; the parents remained at home as the road was too fatiguing for them, and so we started, on a lovely morning, on ponies. The road first ran through a desolate pass, in which no human being met us; only at a few spots where the sun broke through, our shadows marched before us, or leaped fantastically on the creviced wall of rock.

“That is Diamond Hill,” my Wild Kate said; “but that is merely a pretty name, for there are no diamonds about here.”

How mistaken Kate was! her eyes sparkled at this moment better than the most precious stones—by Heavens, they were two diamonds of the purest water, and happy will my friend O’Keane be, I thought. But I soon came to my senses again, for my pony seemed to notice whenever I fell a thinking, and indulged in its own freaks, which consisted in climbing over the masses of rock instead of passing them, and taking every bog instead of avoiding it, and wading in it as deep as it could with all four feet.

At length the great Lough Kyllmore gleamed before us, and at its edge the inn where we were to rest. As

we approached it we heard music. Darby the Piper, better known as the Leathern Uncle, sat at the door, and was working away with both arms at the bags, and blowing in the mouthpiece, so that it was a pleasure to hear him. He speedily joined us, and we went deeper into the mountains. A mile of desolate rocky heath was left behind us, and then we saw a green patch in the midst of a mountain glen, and discovered several cabins in the passes as we approached. We also heard cheerful sounds, and before the nearest cabin stood a crowd of Irish peasantry.

"That is Peter Connellan's cabin," the Leathern Uncle said, "and those are the bride's guests."

"But those are not all!" I asked the piper, who had joined me while Kate galloped on.

"Not the half," he replied; "the others are the bridegroom's guests, and they are collecting before Rory O'Gaff's cabin, somewhat farther down that pass you see there."

The bride's guests had scarce heard the sound of the ponies, ere a shout of joy was raised, "The O'Flahertys are coming!" We had just reached the front of the cabin, when Peter met us with a tremendous piece of wedding-cake.

"There's no whisky here," he said, "but it will soon arrive with the bridegroom's guests. But you know all about it."

I pretended to do so, if I did not, and Darby whispered me,

"The bridegroom finds the whisky, and the bride the food; that is the way with us in the mountains."

I evidenced a great wish to ride down the glen to the bridegroom's cabin, but Darby raised an extraordinary number of difficulties.

"I don't care, of course, but it would be an insult to old Peter."

"Well, then, come with me," I said; "it won't be so bad. I will take it on myself."

And the light-minded piper prepared to follow me, while I turned my pony round. But a great shout was heard on all sides.

"No, that won't do!" they cried, Peter at the head of them.

"Look you," Darby said, "so it is on the mountains. The bride gives her invitations, and the bridegroom his, and the one who rides up with the greatest following wins the honour of the day. But, wait a minute, I will just speak with old Peter;" and he told him I merely wanted to see how matters were managed at the bridegroom's, and besides, there would be no question but that we had the most guests. Old Peter hereon gave his consent, and we proceeded to the bridegroom's cabin, which was about ten minutes' ride from that of the bride. On the road, Darby told me how they manage it up on the mountains when they go a courting. The boy goes to the house of the girl he should like to marry, and sits down by her side and tries to draw her knitting-needles out. If she lets him do so, it is a sign that the girl is willing. If she forbids it, however, and the boy does not leave off, he can prepare for something else, and many a courting has ended with bloody nose and swollen lips. That is the case with Loughy Fadaghan, who can't get a wife, and has always a swollen nose, and so is called Loughy Thick-nose.

We reached Rory O'Gaff's cabin. Here I was to be witness of a very affecting scene. The wedding guests had collected close to the door, the men holding hats and caps in their hands, and tears standing in the women's

eyes. I found my way to the only window, a quadrangular hole, shutting with a board, and could then see what was going on inside. In the centre knelt a young man, looking up to an old man and woman, who stood weeping before him.

"Father and mother," he said, "I am now leaving your cabin, to enter my own with the wife I have chosen with your consent. Pardon all I have done to you, and give me your blessing."

"You have been a good son," the father replied. "You have done nothing you have reason to repent, and our blessing accompanies you."

The mother said nothing. She had covered her face with the skirt of her cloak, and sobbed loudly. Nothing in company is more infectious than tears. All the women and girls in and round the cabin soon sobbed with her.

The kneeler then turned to another group, standing apart from the parents.

"Dear brothers and sisters," he spoke, "you, too, I will ask, before I go, for forgiveness of all I have done to you, and beg your blessing."

The sisters had long been weeping loudly; the brothers tried to express the ordinary phrases, but the sentences stuck in their throats. One held his cap before his face, the other hurried away, and at last they all sobbed like the sisters. This was the signal for a grand and general weeping. No one knew exactly why the other, or even himself, wept; and it was, in all probability, merely the custom to shed tears on such an occasion. But the scene was so affecting through the universal sympathy, that no eye—not even mine—remained dry. Presently Rory rose, and amid the general yelling and crying, father, mother, sisters, and brothers, and

guests began embracing, first the bridegroom, and then each other. It took a long time ere this was all over, for many a young fellow, many a dark-eyed girl in her red petticoat, delayed longer over the ceremony than was absolutely necessary. One lad was specially noticeable, for apparently he could not master his feelings. He was distinguished by a nose which was redder and more swollen than any I had yet seen in Ireland, and by a pair of lips which invited to anything rather than kissing. But for all that he took an exhaustless advantage of the opportunity, and kissed without distinction of years and charms, although not without brave opposition from the other side, till the bridegroom's mother appeared with a vessel of holy water, with which she sprinkled the whole party. Then she fetched a consecrated candle from a cupboard, which she cut in pieces, and gave a piece to the bridegroom first, and then to all the other children, "to preserve them from death and other accidents," as the Leathern Uncle told me.

In the mean while the whole party had mounted. Father and mother got on one pony, on others husband, wife, and children sat together, and every boy had a pretty girl before him on the straw saddle. Darby, with the bagpipes, mounted in front of Rory O'Gaff. Only Loughy Thick-nose wandered about, looking in vain for a seat. "Must I walk down, then?" he said, in a lamentable voice. I was the only one who sat widowed on horseback: I was obliged to take mercy on him, and let him get up behind. For this the rogue of a thick nose was not even grateful, but continually looked after the pretty girls, behind whom he was not sitting. Darby, however, began to play the bagpipes, while the bridegroom held him firmly with both arms, lest he should

fall from his steed ; and merrily the little animals trotted, and cheerily the echo was returned from all the ravines, and hearty was the yell with which the bridegroom's caravan was greeted, as it came over the hill, and took the path to the bride's cabin. "Huzzah !" and "Hallo !" the guests assembled there shouted, and old Peter led a gaily-dressed daughter of the heather up to the bridegroom, who kissed her, and Loughy Fadaghan sprang craftily from the saddle, and, in the confusion of kissing, which now began again among men and women, girls and boys, his red nose was to the fore, as a brilliant example. Wild Kate, too, did her best, although she held up her fist at Thick-nose when he came too near her. But my inventive pony played me a new trick. A bunch of thistles that waved its ruddy top on a neighbouring mount inflamed its power of imagination, and off it went, just in the opposite direction from that in which Wild Kitty was lavishing her precious treasures. But fate was against me : and while I longed in vain, I was forced to look on, as my impertinent animal revelled on the coarse weed.

After a hearty breakfast, at which the bridegroom produced abundance of whisky, the procession started again. This time it went to the house of good Father M'Nessy, who lived a mile farther on, near the chapel, on the other side of the hill. He is the soul-carer for the inhabitants scattered about this district. This time the order was slightly altered : in front went Darby with the pipes, and the nature of his lungs did honour to his leathern nickname. No elevation, however steep, took his breath away, and the droning of his instrument filled the mountains. Then came the bridegroom, and behind him the bridesmaids ; next the bridesmen, and after

them rode the bride. The other guests grouped themselves as they thought proper; on which occasion my pony joined the one on which old Peter and his old wife rode, while it would not by any argument be brought to keep pace with Wild Kate's steed. The procession had just started, when it was brought to a halt again by the cry, "Here's Grey Polly!" Out of the bridal cabin stalked an old, thin, ragged woman, with a long witch-like face, and long grey hair fluttering wildly round it. She slowly hobbled up to the bridegroom, unfastened the buttons of his breeches-knee with her skeleton fingers, and loosened his garter a little. Then she said, in a hoarse voice :

"Rory, have you any money?"

"Yes, Polly, I have," Rory replied.

"Then give it me."

Rory gave her a handful of coppers, which he took from his breeches-pocket. Polly put it out of sight, and gave him in exchange two other coins.

"Keep that money, Rory," she said, in a prophetic voice, "and do not let it go from you for nine days, either waking or sleeping, if you have any love for the life and happiness of your wife and the children she will, with God's help, bear you, for you know that evil spirits are busy on the wedding-night."

Rory thanked her, and said he would do as she ordered. Polly then drew back, pulled the torn boot, that had grown brown with age, from her right foot, and threw it far away.

"Thus I cast misfortune from the young pair. And now go, in God's name."

Darby began his merry tune, the ponies whinnied, and their hoofs echoed in the mountains.

Father M'Nessy stood at the door in his black robe as we arrived. An Irish priest's home in the mountains looks sufficiently quaint. It is not much better than the peasants' cabins, but far more spacious. Father M'Nessy's house was composed of several rooms with small square windows, and a large hall, which seemed the keeping-room, containing the reverend gentleman's small library, a portion of his wardrobe, the hencoop, and the stock of hay and straw. In addition to the padre, his old unmarried sister, who acted as housekeeper, dwelt in this building, whose straw roof looked black enough from wind, rain, and soot. The house stood retired on a hill-side; at a short distance from it were a few other huts, and on a distant peak the wooden cross of the chapel gleamed in the sun.

"I think, my dear children," the father said, in Irish,—and it was the only language I heard at all this day, for the inhabitants of these mountains scarce know a word of English, and in spite of my good will and my stock of Irish, I should have understood very little, had not Wild Kitty and the Leathern Uncle stood by my side in turn as interpreters—"I think we will perform the ceremony here, for the weather is fine, and the grass-plot green and large enough."

No one raised any objection, and to the melodious murmur of the silvery rills, which trickled down the mountain-side, and the solemn rustling of the breeze, which at times drowned the priest's words of blessing, Rory and Judy became man and wife. At the moment when he bent over to her, by the priest's command, to give her the first kiss, the boys rushed forward from all sides to prevent it, and gain the first sweet kiss themselves. Red-nose was naturally in front, but while the

young husband was wrestling with the other rivals, Loughy Thick-nose received such a buffet from the young wife on the prominent feature of his countenance, that it would certainly have slightly bothered him had he not long been used to this peculiar demonstration of woman's favour. In the mean while, however, two other peasants were more lucky. While Rory struggled with an overpowering force, and Judy seemed exhausted by the love-token she had just given Loughy, they took advantage of the opportunity, and one kiss followed the other quickly and audibly. Proud as victors, the two happy men retired, and, in fact, their reward was no slight one, for on the same day they must prepare the bridal room for the reception of the newly married couple. They must spread the sheets on the bed, place a table by its side, and on this two books, two candles, two glasses, a jug of water, and a bottle of whisky. Such are the mysteries of the marriage-night in the Irish highlands!

Good Father M'Nessy and his sister now mounted a horse, and back we all went to Peter Connellan's cabin. But not in a measured trot, as before; on the contrary, the ponies went at such a pace with their heavy loads, that I felt frightened when I saw the ravines past which they galloped. This is the "race for the bottle." The man who first reaches the bride's cabin receives a bottle of whisky. For such a prize an Irish boy will at any time run some risk! The women ere long shrieked, and one after the other fell from the ponies, generally dragging the men after them, so that at last the entire road was covered with shrieking women, crying children, cursing men, and ponies galloping masterless, with their saddles half turned round. But now all the suffering Loughy's nose had so long and undeservedly endured,

was to be requited. A horse had been procured for him, but it had been impossible to find him a girl to share the joys of the saddle with him. But this was his luck : he did not fall from his horse, he was the first to reach the cabin, he won the bottle, and was allowed to revel in its contents without peril to his nose. For, though it was presumable that the spirits might possibly heighten its red qualities, still no attack might be apprehended from the bottle.

Yet, strange to say, as if fate would not protect him from danger, under any circumstances, at the moment he was about to put the prize on one side, an impudent fellow came up to him and declared he had reached the cabin at the same time as, if not sooner than, Loughy ; the bottle was his, and he would have it. Loughy would not give it up, and the dispute was followed by a fight, and the one claimant was joined by three or four others, who also declared they had arrived first, and thrashed the poor boy till it was sad to look upon. It is true that on arbitration Loughy kept the bottle, but his nose was in an awful state.

The fight was followed by the dinner, partly in the cabin, partly on the grass, and this again by a dance, in which Wild Kitty was at one moment a lady, at another a gentleman. When she was the latter, she kept her hat on ; when the former, she took it off. Good Father M'Nessy danced heartily, first with the bride, and then with many others, and his sister's excuses were of no avail. It was on this occasion that I made my first attempt at an Irish jig. The reader will place it to the credit of my modesty that I omit to give any description of it. Only this much : among the dances I have sworn once for all not to attempt again, the Irish jig ranks first. No mortal eyes will ever see me jigging again, not if

there were ten Wild Kates present to challenge me out on the floor.

The jig was followed by the Rincafada, a peculiar and very pretty dance, which gave opportunity for the most graceful movements. It is very old, and seems to have fallen out of fashion in the rest of Ireland, for I never saw it elsewhere. Two boys, with Kate in the middle as lady, led the round. They were not hand-in-hand, but connected by white handkerchiefs, the ends of which they held delicately in their fingers. The rest followed in couples, attached in a similar fashion. I was here that the Leathern Uncle showed himself in all his glory. His bagpipes droned violently, and impelled the dancers to action. They danced under the arch made by the handkerchiefs of the first three, while the latter amused the spectators with all sorts of diverting attitudes. The others were not behindhand with their jests, and then formed a circle round the three, who, like living threads, wove through the dance-garland. It was a dance very rich in figures, which went through all the stages of Bacchantish violence, and at length came back to the simplicity and rest of the original position. After the dance was over, the pine-wood splints—and these are the holiday candles in the Irish highlands!—were lighted; and they had scarce thrown a flickering light over the company, ere the door opened, and the cake was brought in and broken over the head of the bride, every young person, including Loughy Thick-nose, receiving a piece. Then the lights were blown out again, and it was really a pity that nothing could be seen, for Judy now took off her stocking, and——But, silence, I saw nothing, and could not see anything, for the stocking flew in the air, and all the young people rushed upon it and scrambled

on the ground, and employed, during the search for the stocking, the darkness and the situation to feel many stockings which were not *the* stocking, and then women shrieked and the boys shouted, and there was such a confusion of arms, and legs, and hands, and feet, that no one could rightly distinguish between his own and another's, until at length the shout, "I've got it!" and the light that followed upon it, disentangled the strange medley, and the highland youth rose with red faces and tangled hair.

But who had the stocking? Loughy Fadaghan, the sorely tried, had it. He waved it high in air, and the girls cried, mocking him, "Much luck, Loughy! So you'll be the first of us all to marry? Here's luck to your young wife, and plenty of it." It was evident from these expressions that not one of them longed for this "luck."

"Ah!" he said, his nose having at this moment attained the acme of its colour and size—"ah, now I shall get a wife; I don't feel a bit afraid about it!"

Then, Judy retired to the darkest corner of the cabin to put on again the eventful stocking; the two boys who robbed her of the first kiss after the ceremony, left the cabin; and beneath the starlit sky Wild Kate and myself set out on our return to Letterfrack.

CHAPTER XV.

JOYCE'S LAND — LENANE — THE INN — ACROSS THE KILLERY — THE
BOATMAN'S SONG — DELPHI — AN ACCIDENT — A NIGHT IN A CABIN —
THE RETURN — ESCAPE FROM PURGATORY — MADAME HORTENSE —
THE SIEUR DE FRAMBOISIE — EBBIE VALLEY — WESTPORT — THE PORT.

ON the second morning after, I saw Kate for the last time; she accompanied me to the image of the Virgin, which stands on the rocky plateau, looking towards Kilmore. There I saw her for a long time after my car had gone into the ravine and the morning sun sparkled round the rocky prominence. My road ran through the Diamond Hill—but there were no diamonds there to-day—to Kilmore Lake and the inn where Darby had played. But he was absent now, and the lake rolled sadly along, and the wind moaned from all the mountain passes. The glories of Letterfrack had passed away, and eye and heart must again grow accustomed to wilder scenes. The sky grew dark, and my solitary car rolled on. Letterfrack is a pure mountain crystal in a dark setting. The gloom began afresh; a hollow roar from below drowned the noise of the wheels. Then came a cascade, glistening on the steel-grey background of the sky. The roaring grew louder, the cascade fuller. Suddenly the road was confined, and ran close beneath

the rocks of the opposite mountain, and, accompanied by the thundering roar of the Killery waves, we reached the rocky region of Lenane. Here everything becomes all at once rough, massive, and enormous. Naked mountains enclose the view, and the waters of the Atlantic chase madly up to a bay ten miles in length and scarcely half a mile broad, till they reach Lenane. All in this region is of great proportions, even the inhabitants, and especially the men. They are poor, like all the rest, and their cabins are no better; but the neighbourhood of the wild sea makes them daring, and fishing guards them from extreme poverty. No one dreams of agriculture here; they plough the sea and sail out into the storm. The constant sight of the boundless sea seems to enlarge the range of ideas, and the dangers the mariner must brave strengthen the consciousness and feed the pride. At the same time, the remoteness of the region is peculiarly adapted to preserve old memories from oblivion, and the inhabitants are aristocrats, as is usually the case. The dwellers in this region, called Joyce's Land, claim a Welsh descent, and traces of relationship, it is said, can still be followed in Brittany, where, at the present day, there are places called "Villers Saint-Josse" and "Josse-sur-Mer." The tradition says further, that while the first immigrant of the name of Joyce was coming here by sea, his wife bore him a son, whom he christened M'Mara, or Son of the Ocean. He extended his father's possessions, and from him sprang the family of the Joyces, a race of men remarkable for their extraordinary height.

I took up my quarters at a small one-storied house in the bay. It belongs to a Dr. Foreman, who also keeps an inn at Westport. The Killery ran so high that an ex-

cursion could not be thought of ; it rained, too, violently. The place was solitary and sad ; for hours, Mike, the grey-headed waiter, and Wycombe, a huge Newfoundland dog, were my sole company, while, without, a poorly-clad woman would flash past the windows in the gloomy rain. I looked out on the wild waters and the steep precipices behind, round which was a never-ceasing fog.

Towards evening it grew a little calmer, and I walked out on the side of the Killery in an inlet of the hill, and protected by it were a dozen cabins of the most wretched description. The smoke that poured out under the thatched roof, slowly disappeared in the black heavy atmosphere. The cabins themselves looked rain-beaten and damp, and the cold glow of the setting sun rendered their appearance still more uncanny. On the other side of the bay lived a gentleman, of whom the grey-headed waiter spoke in terms of the highest admiration, although his house looked as wretched as the rest, even if built of stone. Farther away on the west of a hill the chapel ; and then cabins scattered along the rocky shore and the mountains. Then came the police barracks, in whose doorway an old man with a sabre appeared at times ; and lastly, Dr. Foreman's one-storied house. That was all. A few women came out of the cabins as I passed, to offer me stockings for sale ; with their cloaks over their heads and naked feet, they watched me for a long time. The huts were in a miserable state. From one of them I approached, a violent puff of peat smoke met me full in the face, and so far as I could notice, the old grandmother, with a cloth bound round her head, with the whole family, crouched on the bare clay ground round the hearth, on which the sunken peat fire burned. They

appeared to be eating their supper. In the darkness of the evening and the smoke, I saw in the background something that looked like a spinning-wheel and wool, but I saw no chairs or a bed. A man was dragging his horse to be shod into the only room of another cabin in which a smith lived. After the job had been completed with endless difficulty, the man dragged his horse out again and drove off. On my return, too, so soon as they saw me, half-naked women, wretched and nipped with frost, rushed from all the cabins with stockings, and pursued me to the inn. In the mean while the down-pour had begun again, and the Killery was roaring. Under the doorway sat two boatmen, one old, the other young.

"Has the gentleman already crossed the Killery?" Pat, the old boatman, asked me.

"No," I said.

"To-morrow we will do so," Mick, the younger, said.

"To-morrow," I repeated, as I looked with a shudder at the roaring waters which hurled their foam high in the air.

In the coffee-room burned a huge fire, and yet it was sensibly cold. Neither window nor door closed tightly, and the wind blew the flame of the candles. There was not a trace of amusement. The only reading for travellers consisted of old papers dating from the Crimean war, Kane's Chemistry, and Liston's Elements of Surgery. The food was bad, and Wycombe, the great dog, in the bargain, made dangerous attacks on me with each mouthful I dared to take. Mick, it is true, said it was of no consequence; but Wycombe was not satisfied till I had given him a whole mutton-chop, after which he came back to thank me, and wiped his greasy nose on

my coat. At last Dr. Foreman returned from his rounds, bringing in with him the smell of the rainy night and the wet dark mountain roads. But he was a healthy, agreeable comrade, and a pleasant relief in this rain-beaten, storm-lashed solitude. I went to bed early; my room looked out on the water; there was no space between it and me; and the waves broke scarce ten paces from the wall. That was music through the night, sounding like thunder, and at first I really fancied there was a storm. At the same time the windows rattled and trembled. The day broke gloomily as it had departed. The waves ran high, the wind blew sharply up from the sea, and was entangled in the gloomy fissures. The doctor had gone out again, but the grey-headed waiter and the huge dog and the ragged women with stockings were there still. Then I took my walk and looked at the cabins and the barracks and the old man with the sabre, and the stone houses and the chapel. After that I went home again and sat at the window, and the day threatened never to have an end. I felt choked in the little house, and I was afraid of the grey-headed waiter and the big dog. In the mean while, the rain held up a little, and the two boatmen were there again.

"Will you venture it?" I asked, as I walked to the door. The Killery ran high, and great waves dashed on the beach one after the other.

"Why shouldn't we?" they replied; "our boat is safe."

"So be it, then."

I longed to be away from the insupportable monotony of the little inn; no matter where. We went down to the beach where their boat was tied up. It was full of water up to the knees, and this had to be baled out. But

the boat was never quite empty, for it was leaky, and after we had started I discovered a hole stopped up with seaweed. But I did not see it on getting in, and so soon as the boat was unmoored, a huge wave hurled it in the midst of the seething waters. The sea ran higher and higher, and when it broke over the gunwale and through the hole at once, so that we sat up to our ankles in water, I said timidly, "If that goes on so, the water will soon be over our heads;" but Mick, the young villain, cried in high glee, "Oh no, your honour! no accident can happen to this boat; it is called 'M'Dara,' after our patron saint, and he has never suffered anything to come to hurt that bears his name."

Still, in spite of this spiritual insurance, our boat became fuller of water, and Pat and Mick seemed to allow that the help of a shovel was not to be despised. Hence, we pulled to a projecting point of land, and while the old man held on by some sea-wrack to prevent the boat moving, the boy emptied the water out, and sang as he did so. These people do not know fear, for danger is their daily surrounding. Three pallid children came up out of the rock-holes like sea spirits, and sat shivering, looking out at the stormy sea. Our boat was again ready, and wobbled farther. The oars lay idle, and both boatmen were at the rudder, for it had to bear the full fury of the tide. At the same time, the water poured in again, and the wind drove up clouds and rain. Mick still sang, but now louder than before, for the storm seemed to offer a challenge to his lungs, and old Pat joined in at times, and the accompaniment of the raging storm and mad waters formed a weird chorus. Old songs they were which they sang as they pressed against the rudder; melancholy strophes about foreign lands and great

treasures, about a man who was obliged to sail "far from the county of Mayo;" another who died a good Catholic in France; a robber of the name of Larry, who was hanged; and so on. Most frequently, though, they sang the "Duan an Bhadora," the Irish sailor's song, so well known along the coast.

THE BOAT SONG.

MICK.

Bark, that bear me through foam and squall,
 You in the storm are my castle wall;
 Though the sea should redden from bottom to top,
 From tiller to mast she takes no drop.

MICK *and* PAT.

On the tide top, the tide top,
 Wherry aroon, my land and store!
 On the tide top, the tide top,
 She is the boat can sail go leor.

MICK.

She dresses herself, and goes gliding on,
 Like a dame in her robes of the Indian lawn;
 For God has blessed her, gunnel and whale—
 And oh! if you saw her stretch out to the gale,
 On the tide top, the tide top, &c.

Dielion, ahoy! old heart of stone,
 Stooping so black o'er the beach alone,
 Answer me well—on the bursting brine,
 Saw you ever a bark like mine?
 On the tide top, the tide top, &c.

Says Dielion: Since first I was made of stone,
 I have looked abroad o'er the beach alone,
 But till to-day, on the bursting brine,
 Saw I never a bark like thine,
 On the tide top, the tide top, &c.

God of the air! the seamen shout,
 When they see us tossing the brine about:
 Give us the shelter of strand or rock,
 Or through and through us goes the boat with a shock!
 On the tide top, the tide top, &c.

Here the song broke off for a while, for the sea was growing more furious than ever. Wind and tide were against us, and the men were obliged to work. All at once a tremendous wave broke over us and completely filled the boat. Fortunately, the same wave drove us towards the shore. Mick was able to reach it with a leap, and, by means of a pole which Pat held, he drew the heavy boat to the seaweed collected on the rocky shore. The two men had their work cut out for a time in baling, and I determined to walk across the hill to the shore of the open sea, drying my wet clothes as I went. I told the men to wait for me, and started. It was four in the afternoon. The wind did not blow so fiercely on land, and at times the sun peeped out. I had no other companion, and my walk was very solitary. A long damp stretch of heath; a stone bridge, under whose arches shot a wild mountain torrent; on a gentle rise to the left an empty school-house; above the dark rocky range of Ben Gorm, ever and anon a green ray of light that rose, rose, till it was lost in the clouds; a mud-cabin, almost level with the ground; steam rose from the damp mass; I did not see a human being there. Then I climbed past running waters into the gloom of the mountains. Everywhere water rushes down the long furrows of the hills, and submerges the damp soil of the plateau. There, a waterfall pours out sheer from the bosom of the broad Muilrea, and sparkles in the sun; there, in the shadow, another descends the hill-side zig-zag. Monstrously shaped rocks are scattered over the heath; heaps of peat, and a solitary workman by them—the first man I had seen since I left the boat. At length I reached a holy twilight, a mountain gorge full of fantastic shadows, a dreamy lake, and gently waving trees—the abode of concealed beings.

This valley of retirement is called Delphi : the silence of a sanctuary prevailed ; the oracular utterances of nature could be heard. The smoke rose from the ravine, and strange forms marched along the jagged mountain pyramids. A clergyman lives in the white silent stone house ; nut-bushes formed a wide arch over me. The pines moved mysteriously in the evening breeze ; over the wall glistened the rhododendron and the laurel, and gay ferns bloomed. The forest hid the gloomy rocks from my sight, and beneath this forest was the lake, illumined by the setting sun, and turning from indigo to the softest pink.

A narrow mountain path, running by the side of rushing water, led to Lough Dhu, the Black Lake. Far across the gloomy lake are two houses, with blue slates on their roofs, and windows from which no one looks down. During the summer they are occupied by English families who come to fish in the lake, but now the houses were empty, and no soul save myself was visible around. From the Black Lake the water flows into Delphi Lake, which supplies the waterfalls that noisily carry it down to the Killery. With the sunset I hurried back : it began raining, and the road grew dark. I wandered about in the damp moss : at times I sank in up to my knees, at others I was stuck in a hole ; I had to climb over stone walls and leap over ditches. Only once I detected a human residence, but it was far away in the hills, over the Killery, in a potato-field. The straw roof of this cabin came down on both sides to the earth : the doorway was so low that the dwellers were forced to crawl in. It was inhabited, for smoke poured out of a hole in the wall. I shouted the names of my companions, but for a long time it was in vain, for my lengthened absence

had alarmed them, and they had gone to seek me. At length we met and went down to the boat; it was heaving violently up and down on the still restless sea. A dense gloom lay for miles over the breaking waves, and their hoarse murmur increased the terrors of the night; and the wind blew fiercely, and its echo moaned in the rocky gorges.

“Shall we start?” Pat asked.

Mick said he would venture it, if I permitted. I was so tired that I almost fell. I said I had no objection, and tried to get into the boat, but it was dark, and my eyes deceived me; I stepped short, sank, came up again, and the roaring Atlantic water broke over me. I lost my senses for a moment, and when I recovered I was lying upon the seaweed on the beach, and the two sailors, kneeling by my side, were removing the water from my face. They did not speak much; they only said that was not a good welcome, and the water wished to give us a warning. There was no help for it but to remain on this side and seek a cabin to spend the night in. I was stiff in all my limbs, and said they should do what they thought best, I would consent to anything. Upon this they dragged their boat on land, and pulled it up so that the tide should not carry it away, and we started. We wandered along the rocky peak above the Killery, and, for a long time, saw nothing. The darkness and the weather, half rain, half storm, and sometimes both together, confused my guides, and I really believe we walked two hours ere we found a shelter. I will not speak of myself, but the two boatmen began to despair. At first they had tried to console me, then they cursed, and then they became quiet and said nothing. All at once, far away on the plain before us, there was a gleam of light.

“Hallo!” the two boatmen shouted, and we went on more rapidly. When we drew nearer, we distinguished the outline of a cabin, and something oscillating over it like a pole. “Hallo!” the boatmen repeated; and old Pat exclaimed, “Now we are safe; a willow wand with a piece of turf fastened to it over a straw roof, is a sign of good whisky inside—ay, now we are safe!”

We rapped at the door, and an old man opened. He bade us welcome, without asking whence we came, and we did not tell him our adventures till we had been for some time in the cabin. On a three-legged stool by the fire sat an old woman, and a man about thirty was lying on straw asleep. “Our boy,” the old man said, “has been standing about in the wet all day; he is tired, and has gone to bed early.” It was almost dark in the cabin; the fire was half ashes, and as a light burnt a piece of oiled peat, called *fassog*, in an iron fork. The woman stirred up the fire and blew it, got hot water ready for punch, boiled potatoes, and dried my clothes. The steaming mud-hovel seemed to me less horrible after the desperate solitude of the night, the ocean, and the heath. We had dried fish to our potatoes, then straw was laid near the fire for the three strangers, and I laid myself down to sleep with the same confidence as if I had been at home. The old folk had a bed in a side room. But ere we were asleep, came another rap at the door. The old man opened once more, and in walked a man with bagpipes, who shook the rain off, and declared that he had not been out on the moor for many a long night in such disgraceful weather. So soon as another *fassog* was kindled, I recognised Darby, the Leathern Uncle. Great was the joy at meeting; he told me he was returning from a christening, and had stayed beyond his time, so there was

no chance of his reaching home. After he had eaten and drunk, he began playing the pipes. All were aroused, even the boy who had been standing in water all day, and old Pat asked if the landlady would not dance with him? "No," the old woman replied, laughing; "there wasn't room enough that night, with all the guests Heaven had sent her." After which we retired to rest, and slept in spite of the storm, the rain, and the distant echo of the raging Killery.

The next morning, when I went away, the old host refused to take any money from me.

"Had you come by day and sunshine to us, I would not have refused your money; but as you came in the night, and as helpless people, I offered you my hospitality, and that cannot be paid for, you know."

The only thing he accepted from me was my tobacco; even the pouch he returned me.

"To me it is of no value," he said, "and you cannot do without it. Keep it, and God bless you!"

When we reached the water-side, it was nearly as rough as on the previous day, but, being helped by the wind and tide, we flew out into the bay, and reached the other shore in safety.

Here all looked as it did when I left it; if possible, even worse. Michael the waiter stood in the doorway, and Wycombe the dog by his side, and both went with me into the room, and sat down by me, and offered me company. I sat for several hours by the fireside, for, without, all was buried in damp and fog and cold—the Killery, the rocks, the Muilrea, and the tall conical mountain in the distance called "The Devil's Grandmother." My road lay in that direction, but I could not make up my mind to start, and yet I was longing so greatly for human society and a human dinner. For

three days dried fish and mutton had been my sole support. I felt more and more like a prisoner in the little inn on the Killery, and the dark storm and rain-clouds were my gaoler. I felt a perfect thirst for human beings among these semi-savages; but there was no release. The bay was covered with waves; against the wall two girls stood in the pouring rain, with their cloaks round their heads, and their feet in the bottomless morass, knitting, and waiting for the "stranger" in order to sell him stockings. I walked out and talked with them, but their answers were short. Though these women look so wretched and ragged, it is almost impossible to obtain from them those favours which are so easily accorded by lovelier women. It is the last thing they possess—what tyrant would like to rob them of it? Besides, they are not at all inviting; I found the women here all ugly and devoid of piquancy. Late in the afternoon came the long-expected "Royal Post-car," but it was full in front with a few old, ill-tempered ladies, behind with their charming young waiting-maids. My hope of a respectable departure was again foiled; but help was nearer than I thought. The post-car had not long disappeared in the foggy region of the Devil's Grandmother, ere the sound of a horse's hoofs could be heard again, and a charming little woman, wrapped up to the eyebrows, danced into the room, followed by a man, who was also young and kindly looking.

"*Nous v'là ! nous v'là !*" the little woman exclaimed. "*Ah, comme j'ai froid, mon ami ! Donnez-moi quelque chose de chaud !*"

I felt like Wieland's Oberon. Home sounds from the "banks of the Garonne," a Frenchwoman—judging by her accent, a Parisian—here on the Irish heath wilder-

ness! little feet from the Boulevards in this bottomless morass! little hands in “gants de Piver” at the Killery! dark eyes with long lashes, and that black piquant line over the lips, and even the “accroche cœurs” on the fine blue-veined temples which I had not seen since I said good-by to pale Blanche—all that, too, in the company of Mike the grey-headed waiter, and Wycombe the great dog!

Any one who had seen us, ten minutes later, over a frugal meal, washed down with whisky-and-water, would have believed that we had arranged this meeting for fun at the Café de Paris—place, Dr. Foreman’s house on the Killery—time, the evening gloom of a stormy October day. Mike the waiter seemed ready to believe it too; he brought down my traps as if it were a settled affair that I was to go off with the two French folks, and Wycombe made his final leaps after my mutton-chop. It *was* a settled affair that I should travel with the two strangers. We did not speak about it, but no one doubted, I least of all, that Madame Hortense—that was the little Frenchwoman’s name—had come to release me from the gloomy dungeon of Lenane, and lead me with her jests and flashing eyes merrily through the dark rainy weather and the fog strata of the Devil’s Grandmother. Madame Hortense was marchande de modes in Dublin. She lived in Sackville-street, and declared that I had not only passed her shop a hundred times, but she had seen me as many times, and each time said: “J’ai vu ce monsieur-là—il a l’air connu pour moi.” She was now travelling through Ireland on business, and Monsieur Charles, her “bon ami,” was her marshal of travel. She supplied the entire west with Paris flowers; she knew every “lady” in the four

provinces, and when I asked her after Miss O'Flaherty, said: "Oh, c'est une demoiselle gentille, mais—mais——" In short, Madame Hortense would not out with it. At length I heard that she used but few flowers—she preferred the "savage weeds" that grew on the mountains to the loveliest flowers of Paris. There was something of the barbarian about her!

At last we started. Monsieur Charles wrapped up his "bonne amie" in india-rubber, and carried her like a doll to her seat on the car, took his own by her side, and with perfect grace indicated the other side bench for my sole use. Away we rolled, and the rain still poured down. But our lady, our Hortense, was a true sun of mirth, and lighted us, and warmed us, and to the sound of laughing and singing we passed through the mountain fogs and torrents. My hat resembled a reservoir; fountains could have been supplied from it; the rain poured down from both brims, as the water does over the sides of the great fountains in the Place de la Concorde.

"A jeune femme il faut un jeune mari,
A jeune femme il faut un jeune mari!"

sang Hortense; and when I closed my eyes, I fancied that I was sitting once more at Asnières, by the blooming banks of the Seine, under the lilacs, while the organist stood below the verandah, playing the "Sieur de Framboisie," and Blanche was seated by my side, singing "A jeune femme il faut un jeune mari." But then I opened my eyes, and the whole grand majesty of the Irish mist world sported fantastically around me, and the song I sang had other words, and I sang it to the melody of the storm that howled past me to the sea, and bore it away on its bosom.

Hortense, however, not heeding the storm song, went on in her way :

“ Ah ! qu’il fait donc bon, qu’il fait donc bon
De cueillir la fraise——”

Strawberries and Bois de Boulogne ! and our road ! No brain is clever enough to imagine such irony !

We drove through Errie Valley, between lakes and boldly-grouped rocky mountains. We saw the mist moving along the mountain walls in broad strata ; we had the genesis and history of the rain before us. The clouds spread it like fine dust over the heath, over the abysses, over us. In the first quarter of an hour we were wet to the skin—our coats, rugs, plaids, dripping. And my hat ! Since that day it has never felt cheerful again. Sad and limp, and with down-hanging brims, it vagabonds in my vicinity. I spare its life like an invalid, and I cannot separate from it—the witness of my shipwreck on the Killery and the martyr of Errie Valley—but its appearance renders me sad, and compassion pervades me when I look at it. In vain is the remembrance of Hortense and her songs—in vain the memory of merry John, our driver ! When I regard it, the summits of the rocks disappear again in dense clouds, the Croagh Patrick, the sacred mountain of the west, rises before me in the fading evening light, and is soon submerged in the clouds.

Waterfalls poured sheer down the rocks and rushed across the road into the stream. They seemed to be born of the clouds. Only rarely a cabin stood by the wayside or on the mountains. The scene changed slightly, however, when we came near Westport, the end of our journey. First, came a wood—dripping, I grant, but still a wood—a sign of more lovingly nurtured nature. And travel in a bare and like Ireland is, land miss the wood for

days together, and then see how you will hail its scattered remains with a species of home delight! Then came human beings again—peasants returning to their cabins from the town—ponies mounted by girls, with baskets hanging on both sides, or fathers with wives and children. To me, these people seemed handsomer, and kinder, and better off. With the late twilight we drove into the town, and how my heart beat on seeing again houses and streets! In this grey twilight and rain even the town produced the most agreeable effect. Surrounded by gentle hills, and edged by green woods, how habitable it looked!

Dr. Foreman keeps in this town an offshoot of his Killery establishment. He had sent word of our coming, and most cordial was our reception, with plenty of lighted rooms, and bright peat-fires and tea-urns, in which the water was already singing. I dare to describe all, but not the first few moments by the fire! I thawed into new life and fresh joy, and even Hortense's "*à jeune femme*" from the adjoining room, did not seduce me from my easy-chair. It was only merry John who by his entrance reminded me of the present. He requested something to drink, and after I had given him this copiously, in the overflowing fulness of my heart, he asked me for my—hat! I cannot yet understand how he hit on this desire. But men, like animals, often form inexplicable likings, and sad was his parting glance at this ruin of a hat, when I declined his request. Then Hortense, in *négligé*, peeped through the door, and declared that it was more cheerful in my room than in hers, and came in; and ere long, Monsieur Charles followed her, and we drank tea together, and sang and chatted till close on midnight.

I woke late enough the next morning. A pleasant voice,

a well-known song, aroused me—"A jeune femme"—but I found it was going away, and died in the distance. I sprang to the window and pulled back the curtains; and I saw, far away up the hill, under trees, a car, and recognised Hortense's form, till it disappeared behind an advancing wall. Ah, what a pleasant, cheery, fresh autumn morning it was! The storm had blown itself out on the highlands, and the bright sunshine poured down its golden beams upon me. It drew me out of doors, and in this pleasant light I found the town as pretty and pleasant as I had expected it to be from yesterday's look through the rain. A little stream, the river Mal, runs through it, with houses on either side built up the hill, from the top of which a glorious panorama is enjoyed. This town produced the most pleasant impression on me of any I had visited in the west; yet, I am not sure whether the pleasant morning freshness, after so many gloomy rain days, and the change from the desolate wilderness to the soft swelling hills, did not have their share. The country round Westport is of unparalleled beauty. Like a flashing girdle, Lord Sligo's park surrounds the land side of the town; and oh, who can describe this fresh green lawn with the glistening rain-drops; the woods, in their gay autumn attire of gold and purple; the chapel behind the dark trees; the turtle-doves in the distance; the twittering birds in the air; and over all the mild bright sun, and the blue sky around, as far as eye could reach!

From the park a path leads to the port, one of the finest and most magnificent havens, such as only the hand of nature can create. Half the British fleet could lie here; but all I found in it were three brigs and a few fishing-boats. There were, however, enormous warehouses

all along the beach and up the next street, just as in the docks of London and Liverpool. But most of these colossal buildings were closed, others were beginning to be converted into ruins. Only two were open; in one lay two casks, in the other there was nothing at all. I saw but five men in the port; two were lying asleep in a boat drawn ashore, one was sitting in the rigging of a brig, the other two were employed in the warehouses. It makes one's heart sad to see this splendid spot, so well suited for the trade of the universe, so empty and desolate.

It was nine in the morning; yet all looked so sleepy here and in the town when I returned to it. Most of the shops were still closed, and the men stood at the corners of the streets sleeping or dreaming. And yet all was most beautiful; the town runs along the hill-side, and the foliage glistens over the roofs. The women, too, are again pretty and kind; the character is quite different; the red petticoats no longer gleam, the naked legs and naked rocks have disappeared for a season. We are once more nearer our own civilisation and age; we believe we are nearer to ourselves! We often feel a longing for nature, and yet cannot support it when it meets us in its unveiled majesty; we cannot look at the sun, we cannot understand the voice of the Lord in the storm. The light must be dulled, the tone must be suppressed, all must be clothed.

I had reached the most western point of my journey. I now turned eastward again, for I longed to be home. Hence I started direct from Westport for Belfast, where I intended to take ship. I could fill a volume with the incidents of my journey, but I am drawing to an end, and must hurry over the ground.

CHAPTER XVI.

BELFAST—OPULENCE AND CRIME—ANDERSON—ROW—KIDNAPPERS—THE
MENAGERIE—AN OLD ACQUAINTANCE—THE SUEZ CANAL—A TOUR
ROUND THE WORLD—THE VILLA—THE TORN COAT—THE EMIGRANTS
—FAREWELL TO IRELAND.

THE capital of Ulster combines, though in a very modest degree, the resources of Liverpool and Manchester. It is both a manufacturing town and a seaport, and while through its proximity to the sea it enjoys a purer air than Manchester, through whose layer of smoke—a species of wall of China floating in the air—the sun barely penetrates, it is almost more favourably situated than Liverpool. Belfast Lough is a broad, splendid, and well-sheltered water, without the freaks of the Mersey, which on stormy spring and autumn nights threatens the ships lying in it, and has often enough swallowed up the little ferry steamers.

But the most brilliant picture has its reverse. There are in Belfast dirty dens of corruption, dark nooks of crime, leaving far behind what the most notorious spots in the capitals of the world have to show. The great northern metropolis of Ireland has much to do yet ere it has reached the solid wealth, the firm patrician position of its English prototypes, but it has surpassed them all in the horrors of its dangerous localities. For poverty and

crime, which always advance hand-in-hand with wealth and luxury, have amalgamated here with the deposit of native Irish wretchedness and filth in such a horrifying way, that the pen for a long time revolts from describing the fearful colour and disgusting smell of this mixture, and despairs of its task when it invites the reader to accompany it to what is called "the Menagerie" and Anderson-row, which I visited with a policeman on one of the last afternoons of my stay in Belfast.

Anderson-row is a narrow, short *cul-de-sac*, which sends to meet the intruder the miasma of rotten straw, filthy rags, and rubbish of every description, with which the ground is covered instead of pavement. There are some twelve or fourteen houses—if these dens can be so called—in Anderson-row, and in them dwell about two hundred beggars, thieves, and prostitutes. Often these dens are chokingly full of denizens—often some are empty, because their former inhabitants have migrated to prison. Anderson-row is mainly a nursery for young criminals, and these dozen houses, on an average, supply three-fourths of the contingent to the prisons and reformatories. Women, trembling with frost and hunger, dirty and half naked, stood in the doorways, or lay on the stones under the houses. I had seen in the mud-hovels of the heath what Ireland had to offer in the shape of want and misery, where human beings and animals pass the night under one straw roof, often on one straw bed. In the dens of Anderson-row, however, in the pestiferous air which crime and unnatural sin breathe, no animal could live. Here a man can only exist in the worst stage of degradation, till his mind grows gloomier and gloomier, like the candle which burns in an atmosphere full of choke-damp, timidly and droopingly, with-

out light or warmth, but still burning to the end. The walls of these dens are black, and drip with damp. The windows are stuffed up with rags, and only here and there is a hole left, through which wind and rain enter.

We stopped before several of these windows, and looked into the front rooms. There could be noticed a handful of straw, on which lay wretched creatures in an indescribable state of shamelessness: drunken women with bloodshot eyes, which they raised idly as they heard us approaching; boys and girls buried in filth, and thrown together in immoral community. The policeman had a story about each of these women and children, worthy of transcribing and preserving as a memorial of human nature. These stories begin at times in a very respectable house of Belfast. The constable pointed me out a woman who, looking older from the traces of former vices and uninterrupted suffering than she really was, sat cowering in the corner of a room, the upper end of which was filled with dirty steaming forms, some sitting, others lying. This woman belonged to an artisan's family; her brothers and sisters are known to be respectable people. Her parents died. In her fifteenth year this girl became a mother; then she was on the streets for several years, and at length came to Anderson-row, where the prostitutes' career ends. When the few charms which compassionate nature gives to every one of us on our road through life have worn off, the wretched women come here, and the beggar is their prey, who gives them a crust out of his pocket, or the thief who shares the proceeds of his plunder with them. This woman had made two attempts at self-murder. With her spectral eyes, her sunken face, and her wildly-tangled black hair, she sits there, until some day one of those

poisonous diseases, which in this quarter one communicates to the other, or the gallows, puts an end to her life.

The young fry I saw here are only partly born on the straw heaps of Anderson-row; another and no small portion is stolen! The policeman showed me an old stout woman, with an unendurably roguish face, who had gained a name in this branch of industry. Her den is subjected to continued examinations, and is constantly under surveillance, and yet it has been impossible hitherto to catch this criminal in the act, although it is known that the majority of the youthful population quartered on her are stolen children of twelve or thirteen years of age. This woman keeps several young women, by whom the boys are utterly corrupted in an unnatural way; they are instructed how to pilfer in the streets and the port, and seduce other boys by representations and promises to Anderson-row. In this way this criminal den is constantly filled afresh; and respectable parents who have lost their son sent on an errand, and whose traces they have tried in vain to find by advertisements, discover him again, years after, in the criminal, whom the magistrate sentences to lengthened imprisonment. The reader will be surprised that nothing is done to end this fearful trade, but those who carry it on are so cunning that it has hitherto been found impossible to convict them.

The last house before which I stopped is the most disgusting and notorious of all. It is called the "Menagerie," and one hundred wretches dwell in it, when all the inmates have returned from prison. When any great and extraordinary crime is committed in Belfast, the attention of the police is first turned on the Menagerie, and in nine cases out of ten not in vain. The policeman asked me if I should like to enter this house, but I was

obliged to decline his offer. The mud in which I sank up to the ankles when I stepped across the threshold frightened me back, and the pestilential air that met me from the darkness seemed full of infectious poisons. But we walked up to the window, and saw inside several women, and three or four children. I put a piece of silver through a broken pane, and at once one of the women came up and greedily tore it from my grasp.

"What is your name?" I asked her.

She told me, and the policeman whispered in my ear,

"Let out of prison a fortnight back."

"Have you food in the house?"

"Yes," the woman said, and produced a piece of half-putrid, sour-smelling bread.

"Is that all?" I asked.

"Yes."

"Are you married?"

The woman laughed loudly.

"Will you be my husband? Come if you will."

"Do you attend no church?"

She was silent for a moment, and then said,

"Church and prison at times."

Then she laughed at her joke, and the constable said,

"A fortnight ago, last time: is it not so?"

"Yes," the woman replied.

"How can you live in this atmosphere? Are these rooms never cleaned?"

"No," she said. "When it grows too bad the cholera comes, and then there's air."

She laughingly disappeared in the gloom of the comfortless room, but I turned back to the cheery streets of Belfast, crowded with people, and gleaming with thousands of gaslights.

On the second morning after my arrival in Belfast, I stood before a large and stately house of business in Linen Hall-street. The sunshine, which poured between the gables of the opposite houses, fell on a brass plate on the right of the door, and I read the words, "Macrie, Son, and Co." These words were the same I read on the card the head of the firm formerly gave me at Killarney, telling me how delighted he and all his would be if I did not forget them as I passed through Belfast. After the identity was thus established, I walked into the passage and pulled a bell, upon which a glass-door opened, and an old man appeared, who was short and ill tempered, and said nothing, but looked at me, thus giving me to understand that he was ready to listen to me.

"I wish to speak with Mr. Macrie," I said, after we had stood opposite each other for a while, he behind, I before, the glass-door, which was partly closed. He looked at me more closely than before, and his old grey eye, as it slowly and contemptuously went up and down me, and at length rested on my hat, told me that my clothes must certainly have suffered considerable damage in the deserts. Indeed, when I raised my eyes and looked at myself in the glass-door, I exactly resembled in my own mind the first Irishman I saw on the first morning I walked the streets of Dublin. I was Hibernian, even to the lining of my coat. Those parts of it which had not adhered to the Connamara thorns fluttered round me as I walked like the rags of a flag that had been in many actions. But I had in the mean while written my name on a piece of paper, which I gave the porter with as much dignity as is compatible with a torn lining and a hat that has reverted to a state of nature, and told him that I would await him here. The little misanthrope,

after closing the glass-door as a safeguard, walked away, but he did not hurry himself, for it was long ere the first door in the passage creaked. But he came back all the quicker, and, with a most reverential face, informed me that Mr. Macrie was highly delighted, and Mr. Macrie begged me to walk in, and Mr. Macrie was waiting for me. Then he requested me to follow him, and showed me the way with the utmost devotion, as if his eyes had never rested on a torn lining and a crushed hat.

Mr. Macrie was standing at a tall desk, which reached above his chest, and it was long ere he could shake my hand, for I found him deeply engaged with Egyptian antiquities, owing to the figure of a pyramid which one of his clerks, with a taste for the fine arts, had proposed as the trade mark for his linen bales destined for export to Alexandria. After asking me my opinion about mummies, pyramids, and hieroglyphics, he said we would let that matter rest for the present, and welcomed me most cordially. Then he telegraphed to Mrs. Macrie to say I had arrived, and would dine with him, and that the carriage was to meet us at the station. In the mean while he proposed to show me the curiosities of Belfast.

The first was his warehouse, the second was his factory; both of which we duly inspected. The third curiosity—according to Mr. Macrie's opinion—was a globe in the library of Queen's College, on which he (my learned friend) proposed to prove to me, that since the railway ran across the Isthmus of Panama, Belfast had entered a new stage of its development, and that when the Suez Canal was finished it would successfully contend with London for the world's commerce. It is true I had not the remotest conception what the Panama Railway and the Suez Canal had to do with Belfast, and Mr. Macrie,

when I asked him, could not give me a satisfactory explanation. He continually said, "Only wait! the globe!" This globe seemed to be the object of his tenderest affection, and he must have distinguished it by repeated visits, for the officials employed in Queen's College library smiled when they saw Mr. Macrie walk in. The globe stood in a window niche. Mr. Macrie gave it a slight pat immediately after our arrival, just as you playfully tap a child's plump cheek, and round went the ball, with Asia, and Africa, and the ocean. Mr. Macrie took a distant departure; he began with the revolution of the earth on its axis, and spoke so loudly, like a professor, that the young gentlemen sitting reading at the tables looked up, some in annoyance, others laughing. So soon as the globe stood still Mr. Macrie approached his subject nearer, and, after his fashion of pursuing his studies, set all five fingers of either hand at once in motion.

"Here we have Belfast," he said; "have we not?"

He covered with his right forefinger the British Isles, and a few adjacent countries, such as France, Germany, and Denmark. Hence Belfast was surely included.

"Yes," I said.

"Here we have the Isthmus of Panama," he continued, as he laid his left forefinger somewhere else; "have we not?"

What he stated to be the isthmus was nothing of the sort, but some region in the undiscovered portions of the North Pole; but "yes," I said.

"Good!" Mr. Macrie continued, highly satisfied with my docility. "Here our ship sails"—and here he worked with his two thumbs over the polished surface of the globe, begging me to hold it, that it might not turn—"here our ship sails," he repeated, "from Belfast to

America, from America to the West Indies; then comes the Panama Railway, behind that comes our ship again, and we sail to Australia, East India, and China. Is not that a remarkable voyage?"

Mr. Macrie concluded this part of his lecture. It certainly was, for the ship had made its entire voyage overland, while the railway ran through the Polar Seas.

Mr. Macrie only made a few remarks on the subject of the Suez Canal, for the day was advanced, and we must make haste if we wished to catch the next train. The village where Mr. Macrie's country-house was situated was on the line, and was reached in about ten to twelve minutes. The road is exquisite; you see the Antrim mountains, and the Belfast bay opens out the farther you go. Ships, too, at length appeared; and the pleasant variety of the water was combined with the charm of the landscape. Mr. Macrie was for a long time silent as we rolled along, evidently engaged with maritime questions of unlimited importance. Suddenly he surprised me by the unexpected information that Napoleon's head was there, close to the shore.

"Where?" I asked.

"Close to the shore," Mr. Macrie repeated.

What was close to the shore, however, was nothing more than a hill, which, according to Mr. Macrie's asseveration, resembled the features of the First Napoleon, and even wore the well-known hat. My fancy was not in a healthy state that day, or else was fatigued by its voyage to Panama and the North Pole; in short, the train stopped ere I could delight my anxiously expectant friend with the news that I had seen Napoleon's head "close to the shore."

An elegant carriage, drawn by two splendid brown

horses, awaited us; and I went along by my friend's side more pleasantly than I had done for many a long day. We ascended a hill; an iron gate opened and shut, and from the pretty villa two charming girls sprang out to meet us. Jane and Ellen cried a welcome to me, and said it was a day they should never forget on which I entered their father's house.

Mrs. Macrie received me at the door. I could not refrain from making a reference to my torn lining, and hid the hat very craftily, which had suffered even more than before through repeated bows and other marks of respect. But Mrs. Macrie was kind enough to say that the man was welcome in every Irish home who did not spare his coat when his object was to examine the state of that unhappy country. Smilingly she bowed, smilingly she walked before me, and a splendid dining-room received us all. The heavy curtains were half drawn to keep out the sun, which threw its parting beams over the sea; a pleasant fire crackled in the grate, and we took our seats at a richly-covered table. It was a grand sight to see Mr. Macrie at the head of his table in his white choker, always striving to bring the conversation back to antiquities, and constantly warning his daughters to "mark" so-and-so. What a pretty picture, too, this pair presented—two rosebuds, so young, so lovely, so fresh still with the morning dew of existence! Merriment presided over the little party, and I fancied myself in Paradise. The Spanish and French wines were followed by some from my home, and we all drank to the Germany I was so soon to see again, in glasses filled with Rudesheimer Berg.

* * * * *

It is evening. The steamer is ready which is to bear

me from Ireland's coasts. Many people have assembled on board it—careless people, who leave this land to-day, as they have already gone a hundred times from one coast to the other, and perhaps return to-morrow, without feeling any sensation. The deck is crowded with merchants and ladies, frightened about sea-sickness, and with their children and servants, their waiting-maids and lapdogs. But there, in the gloom of the fore-castle, sit twenty girls crouched together; they have veiled their heads, and are sobbing and shrieking, and on the shore stand hundreds of others, girls and boys, old men and old women, and they are sobbing and shrieking too—it is the Irish croon, which I had heard once before, and shall never forget; and these twenty girls are emigrating to Melbourne, and quitting their beloved country, and their father and mother, and brother and sister; they are Irish girls, for they sob and shriek so! And the paddles begin slowly revolving, and the twenty girls shriek more loudly, and one of them rushes to the ship's side and wrings her hands and laments that she cannot leave her beloved Ireland, and would sooner be buried in the waves, and an Irish lad rushes towards her, and the others are obliged to hold him, and then he throws a cake and a purse on board the vessel, and in that purse is Irish earth, which must be placed in her grave when she dies.

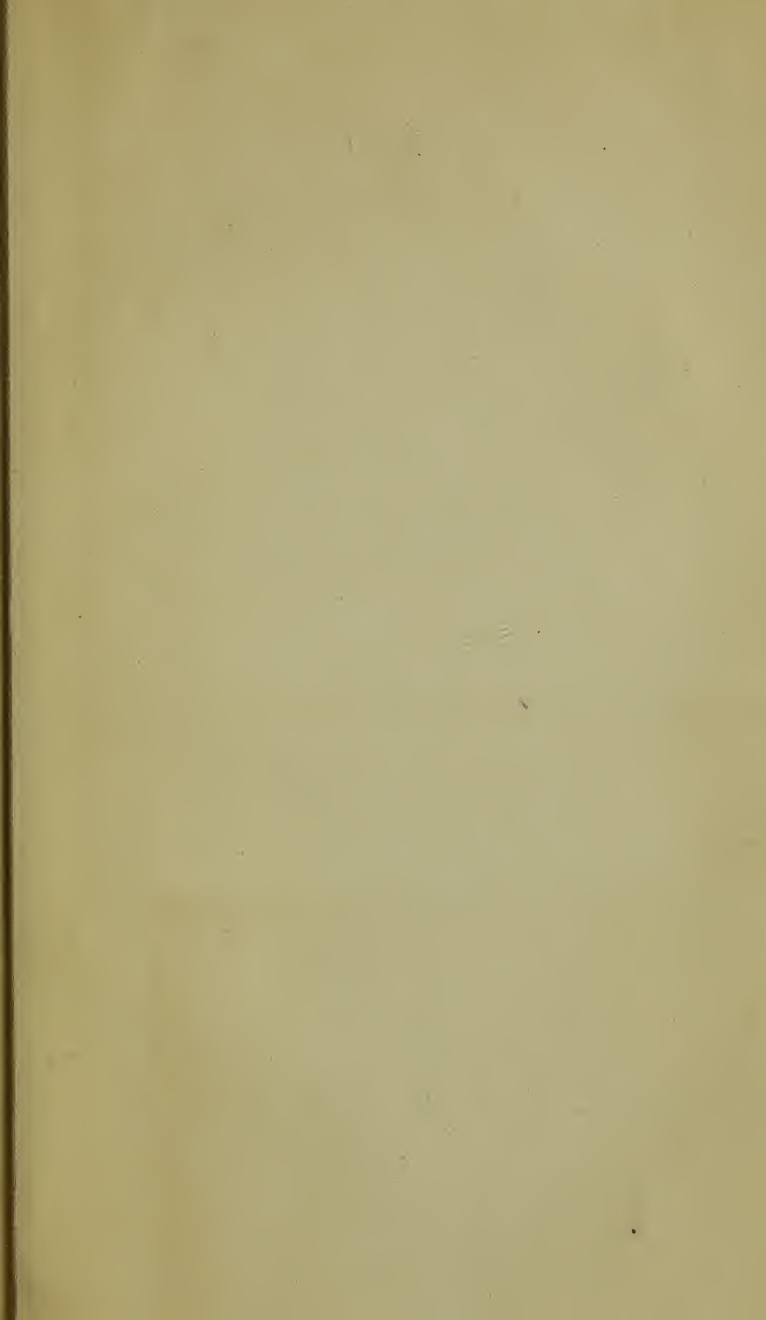
And the paddles bite deeper in the water, and the vessel moves, and the waves roll, and it is night, and Ireland's coast sinks in the heavy night-fog, and the light-vessels flash on both sides. Then comes the darkness, and the long heavy solitude of the icy sea; and the word is monotonously passed from the paddle-bridge to the wheel, and "Steady!" is the cry when a reef comes

or a ship sails past ; and the twenty girls still sit trembling with cold on deck, and their eyes are fixed on the west, where their land has sunk in gloom.

And then comes the grey autumn morning, and the landing on the English coast. The twenty girls, with swollen eyes and tangled hair are going farther—to Liverpool, where the great ship is to receive them and convey them to Melbourne. They give me their hand in turn, and they weep and wish me good-by, and I take my last farewell of Ireland ; then they go onwards, and I gaze after them, and, as they slowly disappear in the fog, I feel my farewell from Ireland as a sharp pain, and the Land of the Saints passes away for ever with its twenty exiled daughters.

THE END.

C. WHITING, BEAUFORT HOUSE, STRAND.



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